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Messiah's reign

Messiah's Reign;

OR,

THE FUTURE BLESSEDNESS OF THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD.

BY

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PREFACE.

For the past fifty years an unusual degree of attention has been given to the prophetic portions of the Sacred Scriptures. And, although many mistakes have been made by Christian ministers and others in their expositions of them, the same thing may be said concerning other portions of the Bible. Still, much light has been thrown upon them, and they certainly are better understood now than they were. Every honest and prayerful effort made to expound the word of God does good, and is worthy of commendation. Even the mistakes of good men in their expositions tend to set the truth in a clearer light; for the truth is one and unalterable, and is often seen to better advantage when put in contrast with error.

There is much of unfulfilled prophecy that is yet obscure. God designs that it should be so. But, as prediction after prediction receives its fulfilment, the faith and the hope of the Christian are greatly strengthened in the promises of his Saviour. The Christian knows that every prediction and promise in the Bible will in due time be fulfilled. But when he sees events taking place which stand in close connection with the ushering in of the millennial glory of the Church, he lifts up his head and rejoices.

The mistakes of good men in expounding the prophecies should by no means deter us from studying them for ourselves. If we were to be influenced by such a reason as that, we might lay aside the Bible itself; for what portion of it has not been falsely expounded by some one? And what then would become of the command of our Lord,—"Search the Scriptures"?

The mistakes which men make in their expositions of the prophecies refer to the *time* of their fulfilment rather than to the nature of the facts themselves. As a general thing, the events predicted are plain, though they may be expressed in figurative or in symbolical language; but the precise time when these predicted events will take place is wisely concealed from us. Still, as "coming events cast their shadows before them," we may know when these events are nigh their fulfilment. Daniel knew from books when the seventy years of the Babylonish Captivity were about to cease. And surely we, with the same books in our hands, and with the fulfilment of so many predictions since his day, may be able, by divine aid, to have some correct idea of the time when the things about to be fulfilled shall take place. Certainly it cannot be wrong to try to understand what God has revealed to us in His word.

In conversing with an intelligent Christian lady some time ago on the subject of the prophecies, she remarked that she very seldom read them. Her reasons for neglecting them were two,—viz.: 1. their obscurity; and, 2. the mistakes which others made in expounding them. "Will you now read for me one verse in the book of the Revelation of John?" I asked. She replied, "Certainly." I pointed out to her Rev. i. 3. She read as follows:—"Blessed is he that *readeth*, and they that hear the words of this prophecy and keep those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand." "There is a

blessing pronounced by our Lord on those who *read* His words whether they understand them fully or not. Will you read this book carefully now?" She replied, "I will." My prayer is that not only she, but many others, may obtain the promised blessing of our Lord.

The question has often arisen in my mind, Why is it that so many Christians practically reject so large a portion of God's word? and why do so many ministers refrain from any proper attempts to expound the prophecies to their people? They are God's promises to His Church, and surely His ministers should speak of them to the people. There certainly must be a reason for this manifest neglect of so much that God has revealed to His Church. It cannot be that the ministers of Christ lack the time, or the talents, or the helps sufficient to enable them to instruct their people in the knowledge of those great and marvellous blessings which God has promised to confer upon the Church and upon the world through her. Is not Satan to be bound for a thousand years? Are not the kingdoms of this world to become the kingdom of our Lord? And is not the whole earth to be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord? Surely it would do the people good to hear their pastors speak more frequently than they do of the glory that awaits them in connection with the coming and the kingdom of our Lord. Some few congregations, it is true, might not be so well informed in the political contentions of this world as they now are, but surely they would be better prepared for the coming of our Lord than they are likely to be.

I cannot but think that it is a deep-laid scheme of Satan to shut out so large a portion of the word of God from the Protestant eye as he has, by propagating the idea that it is not for the edification of Christians to read the prophecies. He knows well, that if Christians will not read them, they will remain in

ignorance of the fact that his usurped kingdom on the earth is soon to end, and that the Lord is to be King over all the earth. Yea, more, he knows that if they do not carefully study them they will in a great degree be careless in the performance of their great work to preach the gospel of the kingdom of God in all the world. And until that is done, the binding of Satan will not take place. Satan knows that fact, and hence his unremitting efforts to keep the word of God from the people, or to prejudice their minds against much of it that would be truth in its season. He can suggest, and no doubt does, that we should not study the prophecies, because many learned men have made great mistakes in their expositions of them,—yea, more, that some of them have gone crazy. "Much learning has made them mad."

Shortly after the publication in 1841 of my work "On the Second Coming of our Lord before the Millennium," a brother in the ministry met me in the street. "I hear, Brother R.," said he, "that you have published a book on the premillennial coming of our Lord." I replied that I had, and that if he would call on me I would give him a copy of the work. He thanked me for my offer, but never came for the book. Just as we were about to separate he laid his hand on my shoulder, and in a very persuasive tone said, "My dear brother, do let me advise you to stop your study of the prophecies. I never knew a man who began to study them and to write on them who did not ultimately go crazy. Do quit it." I thanked him for his interest in me, and said that I had no fears of that kind while studying the things which God had revealed to us in his word. We parted. Years ago that good man finished his ministry on earth. A kind Providence has spared me, and has enabled me to preach the gospel of the kingdom and to pray for the speedy coming of our Lord in His glory and in His kingdom.

As I have been laid aside from preaching for months past, through an affection of the lungs, I know not that I can serve the cause of our Lord on earth better, during these months of affliction, than by writing and publishing some thoughts on the kingdom of Christ. And, if they will afford the reader the tithe of the comfort and of the joy that they have given me, or if they should give him any more correct views of any portion of God's word, I shall not lose my reward.

W. R.

PHILADELPHIA, Nov. 2, 1857.

MESSIAH'S REIGN.

CHAPTER I.

THE MILLENNIUM PROMISED.

THE Sacred Scriptures plainly teach us that this earth is yet to be blessed with a reign of righteousness and of peace, for at least a thousand years, before the final judgment. The descriptions of this happy period, as given us by the prophets, have never yet been realized. They never can be till Satan, the adversary of God and of man, and "the Prince of this world" by usurpation, shall be cast out of this world, and his influence be entirely withdrawn from it. No amount of knowledge or refinement among the nations of the earth, nor of piety in the Church, while Satan still is unbound, can be the fulfilment of these varied predictions which are found scattered through the Bible from the first promise in Genesis to the last in Revelation.

Take for example the following predictions. Num. xiv. 21: "But, as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord."

Isaiah ix. 9: "For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

Jer. xxxi. 10, 28, 31, 34: "Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict, so will I watch over them, to build and to plant, saith the Lord. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; . . . and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Micah iv. 3: "And He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." "And the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even forever," v. 7.

Hab. ii. 14: "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

Zech. xiv. 9: "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and His name one."

Without pausing now to explain these prophecies of the Old Testament, it is manifest, from the mere reading

of them, that the Church and the world have never yet enjoyed a season of such knowledge and piety and peace as is predicted in these passages.

And if we turn to the New Testament, we shall find there also such predictions of prosperity, of peace, and of holiness, as have never yet been fulfilled.

Of these we may cite the following. Matt. vi. 10: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

There has been no period in the past history of this world that can possibly be the fulfilment of this prediction given to us in the form of a prayer. And surely our Lord would not teach us to use this prayer if He did not intend that it should be fulfilled. The kingdom of our Lord is yet to come, and His will is yet to be done on the earth as that will is now done in heaven,—viz.: perfectly and universally. If the kingdom of God be the mere establishment of the Christian Church on the earth, or if it be the gospel dispensation, then the prediction has been fulfilled, the prayer has been answered, and we who use this language in prayer are looking for that which has already taken place. But surely this fulfilment does not meet the requirement of the text.

John x. 16 contains another prediction that has not yet been fulfilled. As our Lord was standing in the porch of Solomon's temple, He uttered these words:— "Other sheep I have, which are not of this *court* [*οὐκ ἐκ τῆς αὐλῆς ταύτης*;] them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one *flock* [*μία ποίμνη*] and one shepherd."

The sheep referred to in this passage were the Gentiles, who had no right to enter into the court of the temple, where Jesus then stood. They were to be brought to Him, and, with the house of Israel, they were to be united and to form one flock under Christ, the Chief Shepherd. This has not yet been done, for Israel are yet "Lo-ammi"—not my people. "But it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God." (Hos. i. 9, 10.) Not only are they to become the people of God in a sense in which they are not now his people, but the Gentiles are to be united with them, so as to form but one flock under the watchful care and guidance of the Chief Shepherd, according to our Lord's prediction.

In the Acts of the Apostles, chap. iii. 19–21, the Apostle Peter, in his sermon to the Jews while standing in the porch of Solomon's temple, exhorts them to repentance, saying, "Repent ye, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that [ὅπως ἂν] times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and He may send Jesus Christ, who was before preached unto you, [rather, *appointed* or *made ready* for you, *Syriac*,] whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

These times have not yet appeared, and Jesus has not yet been sent again to Israel, nor have the Jews repented. All of these things are yet to happen; and hence the Christian is authorized to look for a season of refreshing such as the Church has never yet received.

In Romans viii. 19–23 we have another prediction which speaks not only of the blissful state of the people of God on the earth, but also of the deliverance of the creation from the bondage of corruption under which it now groans. From the fall of man to the present time, the whole creation has been groaning under an oppressive load, and is described as waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God, with the earnest expectation that it also shall be made a partaker, in that day, of a glory that will be adapted to its nature, and which will free it from its present sad condition. This prediction of happiness and of peace to the animal world is yet to be fulfilled. Its fulfilment will mark the millennial period of the Church and the world.

In the eleventh chapter of this same epistle, the apostle predicts the restoration of Israel to the favour of God, and the great benefit of their conversion to the whole world. "If the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness!" "If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" (12–15.) Blindness, the apostle assures us, has happened only to a part of Israel. A remnant, even now, according to the election of grace, is saved. But even that partial blindness is to be removed. It will continue only until the fulness—that is, the full times which God has given to the Gentiles and to the Gentile Church to hold their ascendency over the Jewish Church and state—shall be accomplished. When these Gentile times shall run out, then shall the Deliverer come out of Zion, and shall turn

away ungodliness from Jacob, and so all Israel shall be saved, (v. 25, 26.) Israel is still outcast, and Judah is still dispersed, and hence these predictions of future happiness and of peace to the children of Abraham, and to the Gentile world through them, are yet future: they will find their fulfilment in the millennium.

The prediction contained in Rev. xi. 15, that the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and that he shall reign forever and ever, has never been fulfilled. Nor has the prediction that the saints are to reign with him on the earth (chap. v. 10) ever been realized. But it will be when Satan shall be bound for a thousand years, and when he shall deceive the nations no more till the thousand years be passed. (Rev. xx. 3–5.)

Surely there is a bright future for our curse-smitten earth, and for the inhabitants thereof. Then will creation's groans be heard no more; and then the Church of our Redeemer, delivered from the assaults of the adversary, shall yield the fruits of righteousness and peace, in all their perfection and their beauty, to the glory of God the Father.

CHAPTER II.

THE TIME OF THE MILLENNIUM.

THE term "millennium" is nowhere found in the Bible. It is derived from the Latin words *mille* (a thousand) and *annus*, (a year.) As John, in Rev. xx., speaks of the binding of Satan for a thousand years, the name *millennium* is applied to that period of happiness and of peace that will prevail during that time throughout the whole world.

Some suppose that the millennium will continue simply for a thousand years, as we now measure time. Others are of the opinion that these years are prophetic years, and that here, as in other places in the Bible, a day stands for a year. If this be the true idea of the term *year* in this passage, then the millennium will continue not merely for a thousand years, but for 360,000 years. This will indeed be glorious. Then will the earth and all upon it—men and animals—have a long respite from the malice of Satan, and from the miseries, the sufferings, the oppression, and the calamities that have for the past six thousand years laid its fairest portions desolate and have turned this garden of Eden into a field of blood.

It does not seem to accord with the ideas we have of the goodness of God, and of his promises to man, that the period of man's existence on this earth should be only some seven thousand years, and that during six thousand of these years Satan should have held his

usurped sway over earth as the prince of this world, and only one thousand years be left, before the final conflagration, for the enjoyment of happiness and of peace, without the presence of Satan and his hosts of rebel angels to tempt and to torment mankind. If that period of blessedness and of peace be prolonged, then will there be time for the gathering in of that great number of the redeemed which no man can number, and for the complete triumph of the Son of man over Satan and sin and all his foes. But where the Bible does not positively fix the length of that happy period, or where we may be unable to decide, with certainty, what is the true length of it, our faith must seize upon the promise itself, and wait patiently in hope of its full and perfect realization.

WHEN WILL THE MILLENNIUM COME?

The fact that God has in store a rich blessing for His Church is placed beyond a doubt by the many promises which the Bible contains on this subject. This fact has cheered the hearts of all the Zion-bound pilgrims that have been on the earth since the days of righteous Abel till the present time. It will still continue to cheer the Church until she shall be made to rejoice in the fulness of her millennial glory, in the presence of her Lord and her Redeemer.

As we approach that happy period, the light upon the prophetic page will become more and more clear. The evidences that the day of the Lord is at hand will be so certain that doubt will be impossible. "None of the wicked shall understand" the full meaning of the

coming events; but "the wise shall understand," for that day shall not overtake them as a thief.

That the day and the hour when our Lord shall return—when the dead bodies of the righteous shall be raised and the living saints shall be changed, when Satan shall be cast out from this world, and the beast and the false prophet shall be cast into the lake of fire—cannot now be known by us, is what the Bible affirms. For wise purposes, God, in his providence, does not see proper as yet to furnish us with the knowledge of these things. We are to be always watchful. We are to walk by faith and not by sight. But when these glorious events shall draw nigh to their accomplishment, God will doubtless so awaken the faith and the hope of his people, that they will feel and know that the day of their redemption draweth nigh, and they will be found in readiness, and, like good and faithful servants, waiting for the coming of their Lord.

Though we may not know the day when the sceptre of usurped power shall be wrested from Satan's hand by the Son of man, still, we do know that certain predicted events must take place before that day of glory shall dawn upon our world. By watching the signs of the times, and by comparing the passing events with the predictions of the word of God, we may know with certainty that the reign of our Lord is nigh at hand. Among these predicted events are the following,—viz.: first,—

THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM IN ALL THE WORLD FOR A WITNESS UNTO ALL NATIONS; AND THEN SHALL THE END COME.

When the disciples of our Lord asked Him, immediately before His ascension to the right hand of the Father, the question, "Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" He replied, "It is not for you to know the times, or the seasons, which the Father has put in his own power." This answer might, at first sight, appear as if our Lord was unwilling that they should have any definite information on the subject whatever. Indeed, some have said that the answer was designed to reprove them for their supposed Judaizing notions of a temporal kingdom, and for their inquiring after things which it did not concern them to know. But this surely is not the spirit of our Lord's reply. So far from reproving them for having wholly mistaken the nature of the kingdom of which they made inquiry, there is a tacit acknowledgment that they were right in their expectations that the kingdom of their father David would be restored. They had no reason to doubt the fact. They merely wished to know *when* the restoration would take place. As this was the point of their question, our Lord gave them a reply which satisfied their inquiries, and which led them to prompt and persevering efforts for its speedy accomplishment. While our Lord did not tell them the precise time when the kingdom would be restored to Israel, yet He did tell them that six things should first be done. And then they are left to draw their own inference, from this language, that the restoration of the kingdom would be the seventh event in the series, and would immediately follow. These events are the following,—viz.: (1) The Holy Ghost shall come upon you. (2) Ye shall receive power. (3) Ye shall

be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem; (4) in all Judea, (5) and in Samaria; and (6) unto the uttermost parts of the earth.

It is evident that this answer perfectly satisfied the disciples, and fully met their inquiry; for they implicitly followed the direction of our Lord, and laboured earnestly, with the hope of seeing their Lord coming in his kingdom. Ten days after this, when the disciples were in an upper room in Jerusalem, praying for the promise of the Father, suddenly the Holy Spirit was shed down upon them, they were filled with His holy influences, and, receiving power from Christ, they spake with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. No sooner was this noised abroad than the people came together and were confounded; for every man heard the disciples speak in their own tongue the wonderful works of God. The visible result of the preaching of the apostles that day in Jerusalem was the addition of some three thousand souls to the Church of Christ.

Thus, in the short space of ten days, three of the events which were to precede the restoration of the kingdom had taken place: there remained but three more before the longed-for event should be realized. This inspired them with fresh zeal to go forward in their work. Soon after this event we read that the gospel was preached throughout all Judea, and in Samaria and Galilee. (Acts viii. 5, x. 37.) So that there now remained but one thing more to be done before their Lord should return, and the kingdom be restored to Israel, (for these two events are intimately connected together;)

and that was to preach the gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth. That the apostles strove most earnestly to accomplish this work, the Acts of the Apostles and ecclesiastical history fully attest. The work was well nigh done before the last apostle, the beloved disciple, died. But the work was *not* done. Having done what they could, they left the work to be completed by the Church, and by their successors in the ministry, and died in the faith they had preached, and in the hope of appearing with their Lord in His kingdom.

More than eighteen hundred years have passed away since the command was given to the Church to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature;" and yet that command has not been fulfilled. No one can doubt that it might have been fulfilled ages ago; and it would have been done, if the Church of Christ had not lost the evangelistic spirit that was possessed by the apostles, and the churches in their day. Nor can any one doubt that the work might now be speedily accomplished, if the Church would give herself, in faith and in earnestness, to the specific work for which she has been organized by her Lord. What the Church of Christ might do now, and what she is disposed to do, are very different things. One thing is certain: the millennial glory of the Church can never be ushered in until this gospel of the kingdom shall first be preached among all nations for a witness unto them. That it will be done, there can be no doubt. But, if God should leave this work to the zeal and to the piety of the Church alone, it never would be done. Like Israel in Egypt, though groaning under the oppressive hand of her enemies, she

is too well pleased with the honours that the world at enmity with God bestows upon her, to make any vigorous and successful efforts to accomplish the work her Lord has assigned her. Private Christians in the days of the apostles did not think that the great work of the apostles was merely to feed them with spiritual food, and to add to the respectability of the particular flock of which they were severally the members. Nor did the apostles think that their work was done when they had preached the gospel in their respective congregations, or in their neighbourhoods, while the wide world lay spread out before them in all its ignorance of God and of the plan of salvation through a crucified and ascended Redeemer. But it would seem that the zeal of some of the members of the Church, especially those in Jerusalem, began to wane; and God found it necessary to permit persecution to arise against the Church, and to scatter them abroad. And hence "they went everywhere preaching the word." (Acts viii. 4.) Christians may neglect this last command of their Lord so long, or may do their work so inefficiently, that God may scatter them by the arm of persecution far and wide, so that they may fulfil their duty in this matter: they may then be glad to escape from their pleasant homes, their respectable congregations, and their beloved pastors, and, taking their lives in their hands, go to the heathen abroad or to the ignorant at home, and tell them of Jesus and of salvation through Him. Persecution spread the gospel from Jerusalem, through all Judea, and to the ends of the earth. Persecution brought the gospel to America; and, if the Christian Church in Europe and

America neglect their duty to the heathen world much longer, have we not reason to fear that God will compel them, by the hand of persecution and of oppression, to do the work that the love of Christ alone should compel them to do? One year's persecution would then do more to furnish the world with the light of the gospel, than will be done for fifty years to come, according to the present standard of Christian benevolence. Ministers and Christians should think of this. What has been may be again.

It is a great mistake to suppose, as some do, that we must wait till all the world is savingly, or even nominally, converted to God before the millennium. The command of our Lord to the Church is not, "Go into all the world and convert all men;" but "Go: and preach the gospel to every creature." Nor does he say that all men shall be converted and then shall the end come; but that this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a *witness* unto all nations: then shall the end come. (Matt. xxiv. 14.) The preaching of the gospel of the kingdom—not merely the preaching of salvation through the atonement of Christ, but, in connection with that, the glorious truth that the kingdom of the Lord is to be established, that the king is coming, and coming to reign in righteousness and in peace—is the work that is to be done. When that shall be done, according to the will of God, and not according to our view of the work, then will the kingdom be restored to Israel; then will the end come. The *end* referred to in this passage is the same that is spoken of in verse 3, and called, in our rendering of the words,

"the end of the world." But the Greek words *συντελεια τοῦ αιῶνος* mean no more than the completion, or the conclusion, of this age or dispensation. They do not refer to the end of our mundane affairs. There are two words used by the evangelists, both of which are translated by the same word, *world*. They are *κοσμος* (*kosmos*,) and *αιων*, (*aion*.) The word *kosmos* means the collective body of mankind dwelling at any period of time on the earth. The word *αιων* (*aion*) means a particular era, or a certain period of time.

By the coming of the end, which is to succeed immediately the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom in all the world, our Lord did not mean that the collective body of mankind should cease to exist on the earth; but merely that this particular dispensation, called elsewhere "the times of the Gentiles," should cease. The end of this dispensation is connected with many great and important events, one of which is the ushering in of the millennial glory of the Church and of the world. But this cannot be until the gospel of the kingdom shall have been preached in all the world to all nations for a witness unto them.

The other great event which is to precede the dawn of the millennium is—

THE DELIVERANCE OF JERUSALEM FROM GENTILE POWER.

Our Lord, in speaking to his disciples concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, declared to them that the people "shall fall by the edge of the sword; that they shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem

shall be trodden down by the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke xxi. 24.

Notwithstanding these predicted calamities that have come upon Jerusalem and her people, still, God has thoughts of mercy towards Zion: for

> "Jehovah loveth the gates of Zion;
> Above all the dwellings of Jacob thou art glorious in fame.
> In thee is the city of our Lord.
> Of Zion it shall be said, Such an one was born there;
> This man and that man was born in her,
> And He, even the Most High, shall establish her."

Although the history of Jerusalem and of her people has been a dark one for the past eighteen centuries, yet there is a bright future predicted concerning her. Zion shall yet be built up, and be restored to more than her former glory. "Thou, Lord, shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion, for [or when, כִּי] the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come." And "when the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory." (Ps. cii. 13, 16.) "The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord." Hence the command, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." "The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." "And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee; for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee." "The nation and the kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted." "The glory

of Lebanon [the cedar] shall come unto thee; the fir-tree, and the pine, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary: and I will make the place of my feet glorious." "Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be thy everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." See Isaiah, chapters lix. and lx.

These and similar prophecies have been applied to the Christian Church; but the mere reading of them should be sufficient to convince any one of their utter inapplicability to the Gentile Church: they can refer only to the literal Zion and to the Jewish people. She is now trodden down by the Gentiles. The Crescent glitters now in the sunbeam over the place where the glory of the Lord once abode, and where the glory of the Lord will again appear. Zion's anointed King will yet sit upon the holy hill of Zion. For "the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it." (Isa. ii. 2.) From the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in A.D. 70, till the present time, the Jews have passed through scenes of suffering and of cruelty which the pen of man cannot fully describe. The prayer of the priests and of the people that the blood of the Crucified One should be upon them and upon their children has been awfully answered: the temple of the Lord, the glory of all the earth, was burned with fire; the city was laid in ruins; more than one million of the inhabitants were put to death, and quite as many more were led into captivity; and since then

they have been scattered throughout all the habitable world, and have "become a curse, and an astonishment, and a hissing, and a reproach, among all the nations whither the Lord hath driven them." Jer. xxiv. 18.

No one can rebuild Jerusalem, and wipe out her reproach from among the nations, until the set time shall come for the Lord to have mercy on Zion. The apostate Emperor Julian, about the year A.D. 360, encouraged the rebuilding of the city, for the avowed purpose of falsifying the predictions of our Lord in reference to it; but earthquakes and fire, bursting out from the ground, put a stop to the folly of those who strove against the purposes of God. From the hands of the Romans it passed into the hands of the Persians, about A.D. 614, when some ninety thousand of the Christian inhabitants were sacrificed to the malice of the Jews. It was shortly after retaken by Heraclius, the Roman emperor, and multitudes of the Jews in turn were slaughtered by their enemies. In A.D. 637 the Saracens seized it. In 1080 the Seljukian Turks took it from them. In 1099 Godfrey of Boulogne, with his European Crusaders, wrested it out of the hands of the Turks. In 1187, Saladin, the Sultan of Egypt, took it from the Crusaders; and in 1517 the Ottoman Turks took it from the Egyptians, and retain it to the present time.

And now, as the time draws nigh for "Zion to be redeemed with judgment and her captives [שָׁבֶיהָ] with righteousness," (Isa. i. 27,) God is drawing the attention of the world to her. The Christian too begins to take pleasure in the very stones of Zion and to favour the dust thereof, (Ps. cii. 14.) The recent war in the Crimea

between the Turk, the possessor of Jerusalem, and his allies, against the King of the North, began about the Holy Places of Jerusalem. This war is doubtless one in a series of coming events that shall end in the freedom of Jerusalem from Gentile rule, and in the fulfilling of all those precious promises that God hath spoken concerning Zion, the city of the great King.

It would be vain for us to attempt to fix upon the precise day when the daughters of Zion, restored to their own land, shall take down their harps from the willows, and shall sing aloud, with grateful hearts, We are free, and the proud Moslem no more sways the sceptre of power over the sepulchres of David, the King, and of David's greater Son. But the providences of God, which are rapidly fulfilling His prophecies, show to us that the day is nigh at hand when the long-scattered tribes of Israel shall again possess the land that God gave to their fathers for an everlasting possession.

The Bible fixes the time for the continuance both of the Mohammedan and of the Papal powers. Twelve hundred and sixty years mark the precise time for the duration of the Papal power. If we commence the oppression of the Church of Christ by the Papal power when the Emperor Phocas created Boniface III. Pope on Feb. 15, A.D. 606, and conferred on him the title of Universal Bishop, and add to that date the twelve hundred and sixty years, it will bring us down to 1866 for the deliverance of the Church from Papal influence.

If we take A.D. 606,—the time that Mohammed retired to his cave in Mount Hara to fabricate his imposture, and add 1260 to that date, it will bring us

down to the same time—viz.: 1866—for the downfall of the Mohammedan power, and the freedom of Palestine from the hands of the Turk. Or if we fix upon A.D. 622,—the time when Mohammed said he went to heaven with the angel Gabriel, and in consequence of which statement his countrymen drove him from Mecca, (whence the Arabian era of the *Hejira*, or flight, commenced,)—and add to this date the twelve hundred and sixty years, it will bring us down to the year 1882 for the complete overthrow of the Moslem rule.

All modern expositors of these prophetic dates terminate them somewhere between 1866 and 1882,—within twenty-five years from this time. And who can say, with the light we now have upon these dates, and from the signs of the times, that Zion shall not be free from the oppression of the Turks within that period of time? And who would not pray that the Lord may hasten the day of Zion's freedom and of earth's redemption?

If Zion shall be free from the power of the Gentiles within twenty-five years from this time, so that the Israelites restored shall be in possession of their own land, then "the times of the Gentiles" will have expired, and the millennium must soon after dawn upon the world. But, not asserting positively that this will be the case, there surely is evidence enough, in the present signs of the times, that we are upon the eve of some great and glorious events, which are designed especially to bless the Church of God, and the world of sinners through her. The favour which has been shown of late to the Jewish people in many countries where formerly they were oppressed by them,—the deep

interest that Christians in all parts of the world are now taking in the temporal and spiritual welfare of Israel,—the interest that the wealthy Israelites are now taking in their own people and in the land of Palestine,—the altered feelings of the Turks towards them,—the remarkable fact that an Israelite now has a claim upon the land of Palestine for some thirty or forty millions of dollars, which he has loaned to the Sultan to aid him in the late war,—the fact also that the same house of Israelites has lent to England and France and Austria and Russia the enormous sum of some four or five hundred millions of dollars to aid them in their fightings they scarcely know for what,—and the fact that the Turkish power is entirely gone, and cannot defend herself against her foes, both internal and external, without foreign aid,—all tends to show us that Zion's warfare will soon be accomplished, and that the days of her mourning will soon be ended.

And when we connect all these things with the fact that the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom is rapidly spreading over all the world, we cannot resist the conviction that forces itself upon us, that we are fast approaching the time when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. The gospel of the kingdom must first be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; Jerusalem must no longer be trodden down by the Gentiles; the times of the Gentiles must be fulfilled; and then comes the end of Israel's dispersion, the end of the Papal and the Moslem rule, and the end of Satan's usurped sway over the earth; and then comes the

millennium. Now, as all these great events nearly synchronize, or will happen near about the same time, and as we know that they cannot be long postponed, surely we should lift up our heads and rejoice when we see these things beginning to come to pass; for our redemption draws nigh.

CHAPTER III.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE MILLENNIUM.

On the question whether the millennial dispensation will be introduced suddenly or gradually there are two opinions, which differ widely from each other. Many maintain that the millennium is only the Christian dispensation continued, and blessed with an increase of spirituality in the Church and an improved state of morals in the world. Their idea seems to be that true religion will universally prevail in the world. As iniquity is now in the ascendant, and true godliness is confined to the few, then the many will be holy and the few will be unholy. They suppose that the varied forms of government that now exist on the earth will, with some modifications, be continued, but will be under the controlling influence of a pure religion. Such a state of things is to be brought to pass by the blessing of God upon the means of grace that are now enjoyed by the Church, such as the general preaching of the gospel, the distribution of the Sacred Scriptures, and

the personal efforts of Christians to win men to Christ. There will be, in addition to all this, the manifest influences of the Holy Spirit in a much greater degree than the Church has ever enjoyed since the day of Pentecost. By the binding of Satan they understand not the perfect exclusion of Satan, and of all evil spirits, from this world, but merely the restraining his influence while here, so that he shall not be able as now to deceive the nations to their final ruin. With such views of the millennium, it is natural to suppose that that happy period of the Church and of the world will be introduced gradually, and without any very marked or signal displays of God's judgment upon the nations of the earth.

The other opinion is that the introduction of the millennium will be sudden, and with judgments upon the wicked nations of the earth. And this is, we judge, the Bible idea of the subject.

The 2d Psalm contains an unfulfilled prophecy concerning the exaltation of Christ as king upon His throne on Mount Zion, and as the lawful heir to the throne of His father David according to the flesh. The promises also that the Lord God would give Him the throne of His father David, (Luke i. 32,) and that of the increase of His government and peace upon the throne of David there is to be no termination of it there, (Isaiah ix. 7,) but that His kingdom is to extend beyond it, and to fill the whole earth, and to stand forever, (Dan. ii. 44,) have never yet been fulfilled. That all these varied predictions concerning the future glory of the house of Israel and of the kingdom of our Lord will be accom-

plished in all their fulness of meaning is as certain as the fact that they are recorded in the word of God.

The language of Psalm ii. 8 is often quoted in prayer and in sermons, while the following verse, which is intimately connected with it and renders the whole passage intelligible, is entirely omitted. The omission leaves a wrong impression upon the minds of those who hear the first part of the promise, and leads them to expect results that never can be realized in the way they expect them. The whole promise stands thus:—"Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession; thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." The giving of these nations of the earth to the Son is to be after He shall have been placed upon His holy hill of Zion as King. And it is most evident that the possession of these nations is not for their conversion, but for their overthrow. For their kings and their rulers are represented as having set themselves in array against the Lord and against His anointed, so as to prevent, if possible, the enthronement of Christ. The crushing down of these opposing powers prepares the way for the uninterrupted sway of Jesus as king over all the earth. So far, then, as these kings and the nations under their influence are concerned, they will oppose, and not submit to, the government of Christ.

The prophecy contained in Matt. xxiv. 37–39 is yet to be fulfilled. There we are told that as it was in the days of Noah, so shall the coming of the Son of man be. In the days of Noah the people were busied in

eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and knew not their danger (for they believed not the warnings they heard) until the flood came and took them all away. So shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

The Evangelist Luke (xvii. 24–30) speaking of the same coming of our Lord, compares it to the lightning for suddenness. His first coming was now a past event. It was not a sudden nor an unexpected event; for the time of His birth had been foretold, and His birth was heralded by angels on the plains of Bethlehem. But His second coming is to be sudden, and so sudden that the world will be as much unprepared for it as the old world was for the flood in the days of Noah, which came suddenly and swept them all away.

The millennium will be a new dispensation, or a new state of the Church. If the people will then be all righteous, if wars shall have ceased, and if Satan will be bound, there will be no *world*, in distinction from the Church, from which the people must separate themselves. And hence many of those portions of Scripture which exhort us to separate ourselves from the world, the friendship of which is enmity with God, will then be inapplicable. There will in reality be no world at enmity with God. This reign of righteousness and of peace upon our earth before its final renovation will not be begun and continued without the presence of the King Himself. His kingdom is to be introduced by Himself. He is to put down all rule, and all authority and power, which emanate not directly from him. His kingdom—the fifth in the order of the kingdoms

enumerated by the Prophet Daniel—is to break in pieces and destroy all the kingdoms which may have preceded it. As the coming of the King will be a sudden and unexpected coming, so will the ushering in of His kingdom be. He will not delay the establishment of His kingdom when He comes, and His kingdom cannot be set up till He comes.

That the millennial kingdom of our Lord will be preceded by or attended with judgments upon the nations of the earth, and will be met by a fixed opposition on their part to the reign of the Lord Jesus, is what the Scriptures affirm, and what we might reasonably expect. Satan is now the Prince of this world by usurpation. And if he never relinquishes the hold he has now upon the minds of any who are the subjects of his deception without a fierce opposition, he surely will not relinquish his hold upon this world without making one long and desperate effort to retain it. It is true, Satan once offered to relinquish his possession of this earth, on the condition that our Lord would fall down and worship him. The terms were as indignantly rejected as they had been hypocritically and wickedly proposed. But the time is drawing nigh when Satan must be cast out and the whole creation must be delivered from the bondage of corruption under which it now groans. That will be done forcibly; for Satan will not quietly retire and leave the field to the Son of man without a struggle. The Scriptures speak of an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand, and laying hold on Satan and binding him for a thousand years. The whole idea is one of

resistance on the part of Satan, and of superior power and of triumph on the part of Christ, by whose power Satan is rejected.

If this be so, then the Church may look for great trials of various kinds before the day of her triumphs. It will be a time of trouble to the Church; but God will deliver His people out of it. To the enemies of the Lord it will be the day of their fearful overthrow. The Church will then sing of judgments and of mercies.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CONDITION OF THE CHURCH BEFORE AND AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE MILLENNIUM.

It does not appear to be the design of God in this, the gospel dispensation, to bring the whole world in obedience to the faith, but "to gather out of this world a people for His name." This is the testimony of Peter before the apostles and the Church assembled at Jerusalem. (Acts xv. 14.) This people, with those already saved, and elsewhere called the Bride, the Lamb's wife, is composed of both Jews and Gentiles; for in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Gentile. The Church is not composed of one class to the exclusion of the other. All are alike invited to come to Christ. The gospel should be preached alike to all. And this is the tenor of the commission given by our Lord to the Church,—viz.: to go into all the world and to preach the gospel

to every creature. The result will be that some will believe and some will not. Those who believe the good news of salvation, and who will accept of pardon on the terms proposed, will be saved. Those who do not believe will perish.

Eighteen hundred years have already rolled away since this commission was given by our Lord to His Church. The effect of the preaching of this gospel thus far has been to gather out of this world a people for God's name. Of the house of Israel "a remnant according to the election of grace" has been saved; and of the Gentiles there has as yet been nothing more. The flock of Christ is still a little one, when compared with those who still choose to walk in the broad road, and according to the course of this wicked world. We have no scriptural authority to believe that the flock of Christ under this dispensation will be any thing else than small, since our Lord says, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (Luke xii. 32.) Such language does not convey the idea that all the world will be included in this "little flock" when their Father will give them the kingdom. On the contrary, it is to be given to the few,—the little flock.

If the kingdom of God here spoken of be that final state of blessedness and of peace that is in reserve for all the ransomed of the Lord after the final judgment, then it would seem that, after all, the flock of Christ will be eternally a small one, for then there will be no opportunity to make it a large one. But if we suppose that the kingdom here referred to is the same one for whose coming we are taught, in the Lord's Prayer, to

pray that it may come,—the same that our Lord will rule over when He returns, and the title to which He has gone to receive, (Luke xix. 11, 12),—the same kingdom spoken of by Daniel the prophet, (ii. 44, vii. 27,) which is to be "*under* the whole heaven," when His saints are to reign with Him on the earth, (Rev. v. 10,)—then we can understand the language of our Lord, and see the propriety of calling His flock a little one. To this little flock the kingdom will be given; and, although it will have been greatly increased by the time our Lord shall come, still, it will be small when compared with the wicked world that shall be marshalled by Satan against the Lord and against His anointed. When the kingdom shall have been established, and shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, then will the will of the Lord be done on the earth as that will is now done in heaven. Although the flock of Christ on earth is yet comparatively small, and will be when our Lord shall come, for "when He cometh He shall surely find the faith on the earth," though *we* may scarcely be able to do so, yet during His millennial reign the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, and the flock of Christ on earth will nevermore be small.

The parable of the Ten Virgins, to which the kingdom of heaven is compared in Matt. xxv., can only be applicable to that state of the Church which shall exist immediately preceding, or at, the coming of our Lord. Without supposing that precisely one-half of the professed disciples of our Lord will then be found without grace, (though it may be the case,) still, it is evident that a large part of the Church will not be in readiness for

the coming of their Lord. Hence the frequent exhortations of our Lord to be watchful and prayerful, lest that day overtake them as a thief and find them wholly unprepared for its solemn realities. Matt. xxiv. 42, xxv. 13.

The Apostle Paul in his 2d Epistle to Timothy, chap. iv. 3, reveals a fact to the churches which it is important for them to consider at the present time. His language is this:—"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they, having itching ears, heap up to themselves teachers; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

This is remarkable language; and, as these things are to be in the last days, it shows us that, so far from the world being converted before the millennium, it will be in direct opposition to God, for God's own Church—the grand repository of the truth on the earth—will be so filled with the thoughts and cares of this life that she herself will not endure sound doctrine. The language of our translation is strong; but the Greek might be far more forcibly expressed, and indeed should be, so as to bring out the idea of the apostle fully.

The Greek word [καιρος] *kairos*, rendered *time* in this place, means time *characteristically*, not *chronologically*. The word *season*, as descriptive of the character of the times referred to, would be more appropriate. The word *anexontai*—rendered *endure*—means also to *uphold*, *support*, *sustain*, *draw to*, as well as to patiently bear or endure, or tolerate a matter. The words *epithumias tas idias*—rendered "their own lusts"—do not necessarily mean *lusts* in the gross sense of the word. The expres-

sion means rather "their own peculiar *desires*, *cravings*, *appetites*, or *longings* after a thing." The word has also the meaning of *covetousness*,—a most significant meaning in the present times. The words rendered "to heap up" mean also "*to collect together*." The words rendered "having itching ears" mean rather "being tickled with hearing or listening." The Greek of the fourth verse is also very peculiar. The literal rendering would be, "They shall turn away from the hearing of the truth, and shall be nourished upon myths,"—that is on works of fiction, scientific lectures, fables, and things of a similar character.

The apostle here predicts a time in the Church which will be characterized by an unwillingness on their part to sustain and support those instructions of the pulpit that are faithful and sound, and healthful in their spiritual influence upon the people. They will attend the preaching of God's ministers; but it will be with the desire to be gratified or tickled with the discourse, rather than to know the truth, the will of God, with a desire and a willingness to do it. Hence they will collect together, and follow after such preachers as will be in accordance with their own peculiar desires or wishes. That there is a tendency to precisely this state of things, at the present time, in the churches, must be evident to every observer of the state of the Church throughout the world. That the prophecy will in due time find its fulfilment, there can be no doubt. The time referred to is yet future. It cannot be during the millennium. It cannot be after it. It must be, and we doubt not will be, shortly before the millennium.

The exhortation of our Lord to His Church, contained in the Gospel by Luke, (xxx. 34,*) is based upon the fact that immediately before the ushering in of the kingdom of God, the world will be given up to *surfeiting* and *drunkenness* and the cares of this life. And there is danger that even multitudes in the Church will be led away, with the world, into revellings, and such scenes of festivity, eating and drinking, as will render them unworthy to escape the judgments that are coming upon a godless world and unfit to stand before the Son of man.

No form of evil develops itself at once. It takes time to do it. But coming events cast their shadows before them. So, when we see the people, the Church, and the world catering to each other's appetites, and vying with each other in making splendid entertainments for the mere gratification of their appetites and their desire for vain show, have we not reason to think that we are approaching the time referred to by our Lord? The passage might be rendered as the Syriac has it:— "Stupefied by gluttony and drunkenness and worldly cares." And scenes may often be witnessed now which will answer well to this description. That the men of the world, who have no higher aim than the mere enjoyment of the luxuries of this life, should give themselves up to feasting and to revelling, is not to be wondered at. But that this same spirit should be slowly and steadily creeping in upon the Church of Christ is

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* Viz.: "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares."

one of the signs of the times, and is cause for sincere alarm so far as the spirit itself is concerned.

We have now arrived at the time when even Christians can seldom meet for any benevolent object except it be more or less connected with *surfeiting*. If a Christian man be sent by his brethren of one branch of the Church to greet his brethren of another portion of the same great family of Christ, we must connect our grateful salutations with eating. If the cause of benevolence is to be promoted, that cause is best advanced by connecting the enterprise with something good to eat. If friend meets friend, the discourse upon the things of the kingdom of God must be enlivened by something to eat. Contributions to the cause of Christ are beginning to be rewarded, in part, by giving the donors something to eat. We know that our Lord and his disciples were entertained by Martha and Mary; but this was done not, as now, as a matter of show, but as an act of hospitality and as an act of kindness; for they were doubtless often very hungry in their journeyings from place to place. It may be difficult for us now to draw the line of demarcation between what is proper in these matters and what is not; but no one can look at the tendency of things now in the Church of Christ touching surfeiting and drunkenness, without perceiving that the caution of our Lord was both seasonable and proper.

The sin of gluttony cannot be defined as readily as that of drunkenness, and hence it is likely to pass by unreproved. So also with "the cares of this life." They are lawful in themselves, and, when pursued with a view to the glory of God and our spiritual good, we are

truly serving God in them. The caution of our Lord is, "Take heed that ye be not overcharged" or weighed down, and your spiritual sense be stupefied or blunted, by their oppressive weight. "The cares of this life" seem now especially to occupy the mind of the Church as well as that of the world: hence but few, comparatively speaking, care for the life to come. The highroad to honour and to fame in the world is by the accumulation of the riches of this world. And it is lamentably true that in the Church also, the riches of this world are too often preferred to the riches of grace. The progress of a spirit of worldliness in the Church, when taken in connection with other things, is another of the signs of the times. It shows us that the coming of the Son of man draws nigh. That day will come upon the world as a thief; other thoughts will occupy their minds; and the great body of those who profess to be the followers of the Son of man will be so linked in with the men of this world in their business-transactions and in the socialities of life, that they too will be unprepared for the day of the Lord. Let us watch, therefore, and pray always, that we may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass and stand before the Son of man.

The parable of the Importunate Widow and of the Unjust Judge in the Gospel of Luke, xviii. 1–8, teaches us that, so far from the world being converted at the coming of our Lord, it will, on the contrary, be oppressing the Church of Christ, and but a few will hold the faith of His coming.

There is nothing improbable in believing that there

was just such a widow as our Lord represents this one to be, and that she sought for a long time redress from the hands of an unjust judge, and that she finally obtained it from him,—not because he had any regard to justice, but simply to be freed from her importunity. Or, if we take this widow to represent the Church of Christ, now in her widowed state, her Lord being visibly absent from her, and the unjust judge to represent the world of wicked men, who have the execution of the laws of nearly all lands in their hands, we arrive at the same conclusion,—viz., this: that the Church is an oppressed widow, and, if justice be shown her from the men of this world, it is not because their love of justice leads them to do so, but because it is for their own ease, and to get rid of annoyance.

There are, however, great truths taught by our Lord in this parable, which it is well to consider. And (1) God has a people in this world, whom our Lord calls "His own elect." 2. They have adversaries here, who have power, and who do oppress them. 3. They are crying continually to God for redress. 4. God bears long with these foes of His people, or restrains His wrath from breaking forth against them, so as to afford them time for repentance, and also to try the faith and patience and love of His own people. 5. In consequence of the Saviour's apparent long delay to avenge the Church of her adversaries, many of them will begin to doubt His coming, and wickedly say, "The Lord delayeth His coming." 6. That our Lord will come suddenly, and when the oppressors of His people least expect it, and will avenge His people speedily. 7. That when He

comes, He shall surely find the faith on the earth; that is, the faith of the Church in His speedy coming will still be found among some of His people, though the body of his professed people will have lost their faith in it, and of course will not be expecting Him, and hence will not be prepared for His coming.

The whole parable teaches us that when our Lord comes to avenge His people, so far from finding the world prepared to receive Him, they will be found oppressing and persecuting His people. And the Church herself will be sunk down into a state of apathy, only a part of which will be wakeful and expecting the coming of their Lord. For, "as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be at the coming of the Son of man."

CHAPTER V.

THE JEWS BEFORE THE MILLENNIUM.

THE Jews from their origin have been a remarkable people. They are such yet, and will be to the end of time. More than three thousand years ago, Moses informs us that they would be scattered into all lands, and would become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word among all nations whither the Lord should lead them. He also predicted that they should dwell alone, and should not be reckoned among the nations, and should thus continue to be a separate and distinct people until the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled. No

one can read Deuteronomy xxviii. without being convinced that these awful predictions concerning the Israelites have had a literal fulfilment. They are found now in all parts of the habitable world, and are this day a living witness of the truth of God's word and of his displeasure against sin. There is a reason why they have been thus afflicted. It is because they "hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord their God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which He commanded them; and because they served not the Lord their God with joyfulness and with gladness of heart for the abundance of all things which the Lord had conferred upon them." Deut. xxviii. 45–47.

But the afflictions of Israel are to have an end. The same hand that has scattered them for their sins will also gather them. The Bible is full of promises concerning the restoration of Israel to the land of Palestine, the land that God gave in promise to their fathers. Moses, the prophet of the Lord, who predicts their dispersion, also predicts their gathering again. His language is certainly very plain, and its meaning need not be misunderstood. "If any of thine" (that is, any of the house of Israel) "be driven out unto the uttermost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will He fetch thee. And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and He will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers." This prediction has never yet been fulfilled. The restoration of the Israelites to their own land from the Babylonish captivity cannot be the fulfilling of this pro-

phecy, from the simple fact that that restoration was only from Assyria. But the restoration here spoken of is to be from every land under heaven whither the Israelites may have been driven. The Prophet Isaiah, (chap. xi. 11, 12,) referring to the same great restoration of the nation, says that the "Lord will set His hand again the *second* time to recover the remnant of His people which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea; and He shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah, from the four corners of the earth." This has certainly never been done. But it will be.

There can be no propriety at all in applying these texts of Scripture to Christians of the Gentile Church, and in saying that the language only means that there will be a great in-gathering of people from all lands into the Christian Church. This would be to do violence to every principle of sound interpretation. And by what authority, we would ask, are we to take the plain predictions of Moses, which refer to the *dispersion* of Israel, in a literal sense, and then say that the prediction of Moses in the same book, which refers to the *gathering* of Israel, must be taken in a spiritual sense and be applied not to the Israelites but to the Gentiles? This would be giving all the curses to Israel *literally*, and appropriating all the blessings to the Gentiles *spiritually*. Surely, reason would say, If Israel must have the curses, let them also have the blessings. And this is precisely what God intends to do towards Israel.

Jeremiah (chap. xxx. 3) predicts their return to their own land:—"For, lo! the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord; and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it." Here is to be a restoration of the ten and of the two tribes; that is, of the whole Jewish people. This restoration is to be connected with troubles upon the nations of the earth such as they have never yet experienced. "Alas! for that day is great so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble: but he shall be saved out of it." (Jer. xxx. 7.) When that restoration takes place, Israel will soon after be free from Gentile oppression. "Strangers shall no more serve themselves of him." And then "shall they serve the Lord, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them." Verses 8, 9.

It is maintained by some that these predictions, and all similar ones, have been fulfilled in the restoration of the Jews from Babylon under the direction of Cyrus, King of Persia, B.C. 536. But this cannot be the case, as is evident from the following facts, viz.: 1. The *ten* tribes were carried into captivity by Shalmaneser, King of Assyria, B.C. 722. Thus ended the kingdom of Israel, after an existence of two hundred and fifty-three years. These tribes were carried away, and were located in and around Halah and Habor, on the river Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. (2 Kings xvii. 6, xviii. 11.) In the second book of Esdras xiii. 40–50 we are informed that the *ten tribes* were carried *beyond* the river Euphrates; and that while there they took counsel together

to leave the heathen and to go into a country where mankind never had dwelt. Accordingly, they went on a journey of a year and a half into the region of Arsareth, and there they will remain until the *times* be ended, when they will be brought to light by the interposition of Providence and be restored.

2. The *two tribes*, or the house of Judah, were carried into captivity, and remained in and about Babylon, on the river Euphrates, for seventy years. This captivity began B.C. 606 and ended B.C. 536. The decree of Cyrus, by whom they were encouraged to return, was in reference to the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, and was made in reference only to the *two tribes*. The *ten tribes* had not been heard of for some one hundred and eighty years before that time, and they were not in or about Babylon, nor anywhere on the Euphrates, but far beyond it, in the country of the Medes. And, besides this, the seat of government of the ten tribes was not Jerusalem, but Samaria. They had revolted from the house of Judah, and the enmity that existed between the two houses was not healed by the decree of Cyrus. Nor is it healed yet. But the time is coming when "Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and when Judah shall not vex Ephraim." But that will be only after the Lord shall "set his hand again the *second* time to gather them from the four corners of the earth." Isaiah xi. 13.

3. When the twelve tribes shall be restored to their own land, the Prophet Ezekiel (chap. xxxvii. 16–28) tells us expressly that "God will make them *one nation* in the land upon the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be over them all; and they shall no more be *two*

nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all." Also that a person called David shall be their king; that God will make a covenant of peace with them; that He will set His sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore; that He will be their God, and they shall be His people." This prophecy certainly has never yet been fulfilled.

4. The Prophet Jeremiah (chap. xxxii. 42) uses the following language:—"Thus saith the Lord: *Like* as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them." The evil came upon them literally, and so will the good come to them literally, and not to the Gentiles spiritually.

5. There is another solemn fact connected with the restoration of Israel, which deeply concerns the Gentiles, and which has not been fulfilled. It is this. When the Israelites shall be restored to their own land, God expressly declares that He will cause all the curses He had pronounced against Israel to fall upon the Gentiles who have oppressed them. "The Lord thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee." (Deut. xxx. 7.) The same is predicted by the Prophet Zechariah, chap. xii. 3:—"In that day I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it."

6. One would suppose that the plain and forcible language of the Apostle Paul in Rom. xi. would be sufficient to convince any reader that the restoration of

the literal Israel is a fixed fact in the plans and purposes of God. There the apostle tells us that "if the fall of the Jews be the riches of the world and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness!" "For, if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?" Verses 12, 15.

The fall and the casting away of Israel, we know, have been literal facts. Their rising again and their gathering together again will also be literal facts. And, as their rejection of the Messiah and their present dispersion have resulted in great blessings to the Gentile world, their restoration to the favour of God will result in still greater blessings to the Gentiles and to the Christian Church.

All these portions of Scripture, and many more that might be quoted, show clearly that the restoration of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, under Cyrus, cannot possibly be the fulfilment of those prophecies which plainly declare that they will be restored to their own land, and that they will again possess it and hold the soil in their own hands. "Yea, men shall buy fields for money, and subscribe evidences, and seal them, and take witnesses in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, and in the cities of the mountains, and in the cities of the valleys, and in the cities of the South; for I will cause their captivity to return, saith the Lord." Jer. xxxii. 44.

Many suppose that in due time, through the preaching of the gospel, the Jews will be converted to Christ and will be united to the Christian Church. But this, most

assuredly, is not the scriptural idea of this subject. The Apostle Paul, on the contrary, says that "as concerning the gospel they are enemies for our [the Gentiles'] sakes, but as touching the election they are beloved for the fathers' sakes." (Rom. xi. 28.) The idea which the apostle inculcates in his whole argument in this chapter is that the Jews are not to be grafted into a graft,—viz.: the Gentile Church,—but into their own olive-tree. A remnant according to the election of grace will be united now to the Christian Church (v. 5,) under this dispensation; but the nation, as such, will never be thus united to it. The reason is "that blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." The "fulness" in this verse is explained by the Evangelist Luke (chap. xxi. 24) to mean "the *times* of the Gentiles." This does not mean that all the Gentiles are to be converted first, and after that the Jews nationally are to be brought to Christ and to be united to the Christian Church as it is now organized. But the idea is that they will still continue to oppose the gospel for our sakes. But why should they do that? Why not unite with us in confessing Christ, and share with us the blessings of the gospel of peace? The apostle tells us that here is a mystery, and we should not be ignorant of it, lest we should be wise in our own conceits. God has in righteousness rejected Israel for a season, and that in consequence of their sins. During this rejection of Israel nationally—which need not interfere with their individual and personal salvation—God is in mercy visiting the Gentiles with His grace, and, through the operation of His Spirit and the preaching of the gospel,

He is gathering in from the Gentile world "a people" for His name." (Acts xv. 14.) Until this be accomplished, the Jews will not accept of the gospel of Christ. They are opposed to it for our sakes; that is, God permits their opposition to it to continue. For, while it continues, the offers of life and of salvation through the gospel will still be made to us Gentiles, and will still be accepted, —at least by some. But when the Jews shall accept of the gospel of Christ,—when they shall turn to the Lord with weeping for their sins,—then will this our Gentile dispensation cease. "For," says the apostle, (Rom. xi. 30–32,)—"For as ye [Gentiles] in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their [the Jews'] unbelief, even so have these [Jews] also now not believed in your [the Gentiles'] mercy, that they [the Jews] also may obtain mercy," by a sovereign act of God, as the Gentiles have obtained it. The rendering of the Greek words in the thirty-first verse by "that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy," is made to mean that the Jews are to be brought to Christ through Gentile instrumentality. But this is not the proper rendering of the passage, nor is this meaning the one that the apostle designs to convey.

The apostle evidently teaches us in this place (1) that while the Jews, as such, had a peculiar dispensation, which we may properly call the Jewish dispensation, the Gentiles, as such, were excluded from those spiritual blessings which the Jews peculiarly enjoyed, save the few who may have become proselytes to the Jewish faith. 2. That the Jews for their sins have been rejected as a nation, and God in His sovereignty has chosen us Gentiles

to spread abroad the knowledge of His ways throughout the world, and to gather in a Church composed of all kindreds and tongues under heaven, including a remnant of the house of Israel. 3. That, when the Jews were so highly favoured of God, the Gentiles did not believe; so also now, while the Gentiles are being gathered into the Church of Christ, the Jews, as such, will not believe in our dispensation of mercy. And (4) That as God has had mercy on the Gentiles when the Jewish dispensation ended, so will He again have mercy on His ancient people when our peculiar Gentile dispensation shall cease. For blindness in part has happened to Israel only until the fulness, or the *times*, of the Gentiles be fulfilled. The (*pleroma*) "fulness" of the Apostle Paul in Rom. xi. 25 and the (*kairoi*) "times" of Luke (chap. xxi. 24) refer to the same thing. They have no reference to the *number* of conversions that may take place from among the Gentiles, while the Jews are still (Lo-ammi) "not my people;" but merely to the *times* of mercy that the Gentile world and Church enjoy while the Jews are, as a people, still rejecting their Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth.

Before "the times of the Gentiles" shall end, God in His providence will prepare the way for the Israelites to be restored to their own land; for there can be no millennial day of glory to the world until Israel be restored. That blessed period of the Church begins with their national conversion to God. And it begins after our times shall end. The end of "the times of the Gentiles," and the restoration of Israel, synchronize; for then Zion shall no longer be trodden down by the

Gentiles. It will be in possession of Israel, and the waste places will no longer be desolate, nor shall Zion any more be ploughed as a field.

But the restoration of Israel to the land of Palestine, and their conversion, do not synchronize. The Israelites will return to their own land as Israelites, not as Christians. Their conversion nationally, and their deep and unfeigned sorrow for all their past sins, is an event subsequent to their return. There may be, and probably there will be, a partial return of the *two* tribes first. And this will doubtless take place as soon as the power of the Turks over Syria shall be broken, and the Jews be permitted to return, and to own the soil as in days past. They of course will establish Judaism again as soon as they possibly can. But that cannot be fully done until the holy hill of Zion shall again be in their possession. The Israelites were driven out of their own land as Israelites: they remain such, and as such will they again return. The Prophet Ezekiel informs us that they will be gathered out from all nations, and they will possess silver and gold, and cattle and goods, and will be dwelling in the land in unwalled villages, at rest and in safety. (Ezek. xxxviii.) How long they will remain in this state of tranquillity we know not. Forty years, and even less, may be time sufficient for them to be settled in their land according as the prophet describes them. But this peaceful state will not long continue. Jerusalem will be besieged by the invading army of Gog and Magog. The result will be the overthrow of all those nations that shall combine against Jerusalem. And such will be the marked interposition of Providence

in their behalf that they will be led to confess their Messiah, and to turn unto the Lord with great lamentation over their sins and with true penitence of heart. Then it is that their national conversion takes place. And then will commence a new dispensation of earth,—viz.: the millennial state of the Church. Their conversion to God takes place in their own land. Where they sinned there they will repent. Ezek. xxxvi. 25–27; Jer. xxxii. 37–42.

That the restoration of Israel will soon take place we doubt not. The recent war between the allied powers and Russia did not terminate until the ambition of Russia was checked for the present, and the power of the Turk was still more crippled and his hold on Syria was rendered less firm. The great battle of Armageddon is not, and cannot be, till Israel be restored. Nor can it be out of Palestine. The armies are to centre in and around Jerusalem. There the battle is to be fought, according to the Prophet Zechariah, and surely he should know. (Zech. xii. 1–10; xiv. 1–12.) "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness." "Her converts;" her returned ones. The expression (שָׁבֶיהָ) *Shabeha* does not mean converted in the Christian sense of that word, but simply *her returning ones*, or those of the Israelites that may return to the Holy Land. They will be brought back in the midst of judgments upon the Gentile nations, and through God's special favour and beneficence. The Israelites were not brought out of Egypt empty-handed after two hundred and twenty-five years of servitude, nor will the Israelites be restored to

Jerusalem in these latter days in poverty. God will have mercy on them. He will give them favour in the sight of the Gentile nations, so that when they do return they will be aided, and kindly too, by many of the nations. The special promise of God is that "the sons of strangers shall build up thy [Zion's] walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee; for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee." "I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterwards thou [Jerusalem] shalt be called The City of Righteousness, The faithful city." Isa. i. 26, 27; lx. 10.

It is vain to conjecture what day, or month, or year, these remarkable prophecies concerning the restoration of Israel shall take place. All we know is that they certainly will be literally fulfilled. And from the present signs of the times, and from the known date of the fulfilment of many of the prophecies, it is most evident that not a great many years can intervene till all these things shall be accomplished. The providence of God is rapidly preparing the way for their return. God in days past raised up Cyrus to aid the Jews to return from Babylon. He will raise up deliverers for them again. The kings of the earth fight against each other. They have their plans, and God has His. They seek not to glorify God in their warfare, nor is it to benefit his people; but God's designs are clearly revealed in His word. All these agitations are preparatory measures for Israel's safe return and safe possession of the land of promise. While God is preparing the way for their return, He is also opening a wide

door for the spread of the gospel among all the nations of the earth. These two great purposes move on together. For this gospel of the kingdom must be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and *then* (and not till then) shall the end (the completion of the age) be. Matt. xxiv. 3–14; Luke xxi. 24.

CHAPTER VI.

THE NATURE OF THE MILLENNIUM.

On the subject now under consideration—viz.: the nature of the millennium—there are two directly opposite opinions. The post-millennialists—that is, those who hold to the personal coming of our Lord after the millennium, at the final judgment—maintain that the millennium is only the gospel dispensation continued for a thousand years, during which time true Christianity will universally prevail. Some of them hold the idea that all the inhabitants of the world will then be righteous. Others suppose that only the majority will be righteous, and that the Jews will be incorporated into the Christian Church, that the celebration of the Lord's Supper will be continued in the Church, and that, as regards the nations of the earth, they will exist, as now, under separate governments and speaking different languages, but that all of them will be governed by righteous laws executed by righteous rulers. There will be no change in the physical appearance of the

earth, except what may arise from a better knowledge of agriculture and from the exercise of universal industry. There will be no change in the nature of the animals. The wild beasts will still be wild; but the tame, and those used by man, will be kindly treated. Knowledge will of course be greatly increased, and universal plenty and peace will abound. With many who hold this general view, the idea is entertained that Satan will still have access to this earth; and that by his binding for a thousand years we are simply to understand that his influence is to be greatly restrained.

The other view, and the one held by the premillennialists, includes the idea both of the spiritual and the personal reign of the Messiah on the earth for the thousand years. The government of this world will then be purely THEOCRATIC. The sole power will be in the hands of the Lord Jesus, as the Son of man, the Son of Abraham, the Son of David. "The Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one." (Zech. xiv. 9.) Twice already has this form of government been manifested on earth. It appeared first in the garden of Eden. Then Jehovah was King, and Adam may be considered as His prime minister. He was the installed king over all the earth, acting for and under the direction of his Creator, until by his transgression he lost his dominion as well as his righteousness. Again, in Israel this form of government appeared, and continued from the time that Moses led the people out from Egyptian bondage, until they rejected the Lord and chose Saul to be their king, so that they might be in fashion with the Gentile nations of the

earth. The theocracy continued but a short time among the Jews, and a shorter time still in Eden. But the theocracy will again be established; and, when established, it will never pass away. Daniel assures us that "the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and it shall stand forever." (Daniel ii. 44.) The presence of our Lord Himself during the millennium will by no means exclude the presence of the Holy Spirit, nor His direct agency in sanctifying the souls of men; His agency will be as necessary then as it is now. During the temporary bodily absence of our Lord from this world, the Holy Spirit takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto His Church. And when our Lord shall return, the work of the Spirit will still be continued. The absence of our Lord is not necessary to the continuance of the Holy Spirit here. But it was necessary that our Lord should return to the throne on high, and thus show that the work He had to perform during and by His first advent had been accomplished, and that, in consequence of this, the Holy Spirit, as a Comforter, would come and dwell with man on the earth.

Under the special government of the Lord Jesus, the whole aspect of things on the earth will be changed. The groans of creation will cease. Nature will exult in the restored favour of God. Wars and pestilence and horrid disease shall depart. The glowing descriptions of the happiness and peace of earth, including all animate nature, which we find in the prophecies of Isaiah xi., lx. 17–25, Micah ii. 1–4, Hosea ii. 18–23, will then be fully realized. The families of earth will be the

family of God. All will be holy; for the Holy One shall dwell with man. "Then shall the moon be confounded and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients, gloriously." (Isaiah xxiv. 23.) The judicious Calvin, in his comment on Rom. viii. 21, has the following forcible remarks:—"He [Paul] does not mean that all creatures shall be partakers of the same glory with the sons of God, but that they, according to their nature, shall be participators of a better condition; for God will restore to a perfect state the world now fallen, together with mankind. But what that perfection will be as to beasts, as well as plants and metals, it is not meet nor right in us to inquire more curiously; for the chief effect of corruption is decay. Let us then be content with this simple doctrine:—that such will be the constitution and the complete order of things, that nothing will be deformed nor fading." (See Moses Stewart.)

In the prophecy of Daniel, chapters ii. and vii., we have, in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, a symbolical representation of the four great Gentile kingdoms that should exist upon the earth until the Son of man should come and set up a kingdom that never should end. These four kingdoms have followed each other in regular succession. They have been kingdoms on this earth. The subjects of them have been men in the flesh. Their rulers have been men. One after another they have passed away. And while the king in his dream looked on the image, he saw a stone cut out of the mountain, without hands, smite the image on its feet, that were

composed of iron and clay, and break them to pieces. The fragments of the iron, the clay, the silver, and the gold, of which the image had been composed, became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, and no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. The Prophet Daniel, in expounding this dream, informs the king that four kingdoms should exist on the earth. The first was then in existence, and over it Nebuchadnezzer then reigned. He was the head of gold. As the fourth kingdom became divided into ten separate kingdoms, which had no more affinity for each other than clay had for iron, he saw that then the God of heaven would set up a kingdom which should never be destroyed. And while this fifth kingdom destroyed and occupied the geographical territory of the fourth kingdom, it continued to increase until it had occupied also the territory of the previous three kingdoms, and finally filled the whole earth.

From the language of the prophecy it is impossible to suppose that the kingdom of God that was to be set up during the divided state of the fourth kingdom can be a merely spiritual kingdom. The kingdom must be as literal a kingdom as any that had preceded it, for a merely spiritual state of feeling among men on the earth, though of the purest kind, cannot supply the place of government and of law, which are essentially necessary to the idea of a kingdom.

It is also evident, from the particular description given us of this kingdom and of the time *when* it should be

set up, that it is yet a future kingdom. It cannot possibly be the Church of our Lord, under the present dispensation, for the kingdom was not to be set up until the fourth kingdom should be divided into ten kingdoms. This was not fully done until about the year of our Lord 476, and long after the ascension of Christ to the right hand of the Father. The present dispensation began with the ministry of Christ. But the Church was not then organized. It has existed in one form or another since the fall of man and will exist forever. But, further, this kingdom is to destroy all the *previous* kingdoms and to occupy their place. But the Church of Christ has not done that. Nor is it the design of God by the gospel to destroy kingdoms, but to convert sinners.

The kingdom of our Lord is to be an earthly kingdom, not in its *nature*, but in its *locality*; that is, it is to be *on* this earth. This is in accordance with the prediction in Rev. xi. 15, which declares that the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever. The idea evidently is that all the governments now upon the earth shall be overturned, and the people shall become subject to the direct rule and control of the Man Christ Jesus, our Lord. Jesus shall reign supreme and alone, for Satan, the present prince of this world by usurpation, shall be cast out from it, and never after shall a foot of this wide earth come back again under his oppressive and tyrannical rule. The kingdom will be the Lord's, and He will give it to the people of the saints of the Most High God, whose kingdom is an everlasting

kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him. Dan. vii. 27.

The millennial dispensation of the Church upon the earth is not the last state of the Church on the earth. It is a mixed state. Although it will be far in advance of any thing that the world has ever yet witnessed, there is still a higher glory for the Church and for the world after the thousand years shall have passed away. The dispensation of the fulness of the times, (Eph. i. 10,) which is to follow the present dispensation, is itself to be succeeded by the brightest and the most glorious state that the world will ever witness. Then the New Jerusalem will come down from God out of heaven, and eternally the Son of God will tabernacle with men. Then will this earth renewed be the centre of God's universal empire forever and ever. For wherever the King himself is, there must be the *centre* and the source of all power. The future of this world is a bright one. May the happy period soon begin!

CHAPTER VII.

THE SECOND ADVENT.

THE personal and visible bodily presence of the Man Christ Jesus dwelling on this earth again is essential to the scriptural idea of the millennium. There is no truth more plainly taught in the word of God than this. If our Lord is ever to judge the quick and the dead, that will be done at His coming. Hence says the Apostle Paul to Timothy, (chap. iv. 1,) "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom, preach the word." The judgment upon the nations of the earth, the quick (ζωυτος) and the dead, (νεκρους,) will not take place at the same point of time. But both will be done after the return of the Judge. The nations—the living—will be judged immediately on His coming. The dead—that is, those who are now dead—will not be judged until the close of the millennium, and after the final resurrection. But as our Lord will not leave this world in any sense under the control of Satan after His return, nor will His bodily presence be withdrawn from it as it now is, the apostle very properly places both these judgments after His coming, and under the administration of His government at His coming and kingdom.

Reason would say that if the kingdoms of this world

are to become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, it is necessary that He should be present Himself to manage and to control the affairs of His kingdom. And this is precisely what the Prophet Daniel affirms. He saw in visions one like the Son of man, the Messiah, come to the Ancient of days, and there was given to Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, and nations, and languages should serve him. This kingdom is "under the whole heaven." And it is not to be left to other people. It is not to be followed by any subsequent kingdom, for it shall stand forever. (Dan. ii. 44.) Nor is it to be managed by any finite mind, for the Lord shall be King over all the earth. Zech. xiv. 9.

It is not needful to cite all the passages in the Old and New Testaments which bear directly upon this subject, or to comment upon them. One text would be sufficient; for, if one plain declaration of God's word be not sufficient to establish the truth it may express, a thousand would not do it. The difficulty here is not to find texts sufficient to prove this point, but it is to know which to select from the many that lie before us.

We will begin with that remarkably plain and forcible prophecy found in Isaiah ix. 6, 7, and the explanation given of it by the angel who appeared to Mary, announcing the birth of Jesus. In this prophecy, uttered seven hundred years before the birth of the Messiah, the prophet assures Israel that unto them—"unto us—a child is [shall be] born, and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, [or Father of the

Everlasting Ages,] the Prince of peace. Of the increase of His government and peace no end, [אֵין קֵץ no termination,] upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

This is the prophecy. And when the time had come nigh for this son to be born to David, the angel announces the joyful tidings to Mary in the following language, saying, "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give to him the throne of His father David; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end." Luke i. 30–33.

Here, then, we have a plain prophecy telling us that a son according to the flesh is to be born; that this son is to be a lineal descendant from David the king; that He is to succeed to the government of the house of Israel; that He is to be upon the throne of David and over his kingdom; that His authority will not terminate with the narrow limits of David's kingdom; that, while He shall establish the throne and kingdom of David, His authority will extend and increase beyond it, and that the veracity of God is pledged to fulfil this purpose.

And when we come to the prediction of the angel, we find that He cheers the house of Israel by telling Mary that the Lord will give Him the throne of His father David, and that He shall rule over the house of

Jacob forever. Jesus was born in due time, in accordance with the predictions; and the angel who appeared to the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem, on the night of the Saviour's birth, announced to them (who were Jews) the glad tidings, saying, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For *unto you* [the house of Israel] is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." (Luke ii. 8–11.) Thus was the prediction of Isaiah literally fulfilled. The promised son is born.

When we come to the public ministry of our Lord, we find Him calling upon the house of Israel to repent of their sins, for the kingdom was at hand. The kingdom referred to can be no other than the one spoken of by Isaiah and by Daniel. It was at hand, because He, the King, and the lawful heir to the throne of His father David, had come, and was then in their midst. When asked by Pilate if He was a King, He declared that He was a King, and that for that purpose He had been born. And when He was crucified, it was publicly declared by the inscription upon His cross that He was "the King of the Jews."

To say now that all these predictions and their plain fulfilment, so far as they have yet been fulfilled, are to be understood merely in a spiritual sense, and not literally, is to falsify the word of the Lord, and to flatly contradict the testimony of the angel of the Lord, and that of Jesus himself. It is a Papistic theology that teaches that David's throne is the Christian Church and not the literal throne of David the king, whose kingdom

was over the twelve tribes of Israel and the centre of whose government was on Mount Zion, in Jerusalem, in the land of Palestine. If Jesus be the heir to David's throne in a spiritual sense only, then must He be the son of David in a spiritual sense only. But He is the son of David according to the flesh. And if He is to raise up the throne and the kingdom of His father David, He must do it in the flesh. In spirit He is David's Lord; but according to the flesh He is David's son. And it is not possible for Jesus, as the son of David and heir to his throne, to possess more of this earth than what His father possessed. If He shall ultimately possess the whole world, as He most assuredly will, He will do so, not in virtue of His being the son of David, but in virtue of His being the second Adam, the Son of man, and the heir to all things, He by His death having redeemed it from the usurped power of Satan.

There are temporal and spiritual blessings in store for both Jews and Gentiles, which they have never yet obtained. The temporal blessings will come to the house of Israel through Christ, the Messiah, because He is the son of David the king, and the rightful heir to David's throne and kingdom. The spiritual blessings will flow to them through the Messiah, who is the son of Abraham. Thus will they, through Him who is the son of David, the son of Abraham, receive all the temporal and all the spiritual blessings which God has promised them in His covenants with David and with Abraham.

The temporal and the spiritual blessings which the Gentiles shall receive through Jesus will come first to

the *Church*, because they are by faith made partakers with Israel of the blessings promised to them; and, secondly, to the *world*, because Christ is the heir of all things, and in Him shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

When our Lord offered the kingdom to Israel,—that is, offered to restore the kingdom of His father David, and be Himself the King, and to rule over the house of Jacob,—if they had accepted Him as their Messiah and their King, the kingdom of the Lord would then have been established on the earth. But they rejected Him. "He came into His own possessions, [εις τα ιδια,] but His own people [οἱ ἰδιοι] received Him not." (John i. 11.) And hence He tells the Jews that the kingdom—of course, the kingdom He came to establish or revive—shall be taken from them and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. (Matt. xxi. 43.) This kingdom was not the gospel dispensation, nor the Christian Church, for the Jews now have the privilege of entering the Christian Church as well as the Gentiles. But it was the kingdom which Jesus, as the Messiah and as the Son of man, came to establish, and which He will ultimately establish with Israel. For He is to sit upon the throne of His father David. From that as a centre, His kingdom as Messiah shall increase until it fill the whole earth.

The 2d Psalm contains a prophecy which never can be fulfilled until Jesus the Son shall sit upon the holy hill of Zion as King. The decree of the Most High has been published, and in due time it will be executed. The heathen will oppose, and the kings and the rulers

of the earth will take counsel together to prevent His exercise of kingly authority over all the nations of the earth; but their efforts will be vain. He will have the nations of the earth for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. He will break them with a rod of iron, and will dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

This prophecy cannot possibly be fulfilled in Christ's reigning over the Church, for He was over that from the day that there was a Church first on the earth. And, besides, this reigning of Jesus as King upon Mount Zion was such a reigning as could not be done until He had been raised up from the dead, for this seems to be the meaning of the expression "This day have I begotten thee," as it is explained by the apostle in Acts xiii. 33, 34.

The Prophet Isaiah (xxiv. 23) predicts most clearly the reigning of Christ personally in Jerusalem:—"It shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord will punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth that are on the earth. Then the moon shall be confounded and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients, gloriously." When shall this take place? The answer is, "IN THAT DAY:" when these dreadful judgments shall come upon the nations of the earth which are spoken of in the previous verses. The reign of the Messiah is to be ushered in by judgments upon the nations of the earth, and not by the mild and persuasive influence of the gospel. (Isa. i. 27.) And when He comes to reign He will come in His own glory and in the glory of the Father, and be attended by an un-

numbered host of angels and by myriads of His saints, for "the Lord my God will come, and all the saints with him." (Zech. xiv. 5.) "He comes to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired by all them that believe." (2 Thess. i. 10.) As this is the case, our Lord will appear in His most glorious manner.

When He appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration, before Peter, James, and John, His face shone as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light. (Matt. xvii. 2.) And when our Lord appeared to the persecuting Saul, the light of His glorious person was "above the brightness of the sun at mid-day." (Acts xxii. 6, xxvi. 13.) Now, if this be so, (and it is,) will it be thought strange that, when our Lord shall come again in His glory, the sun and the moon should both be confounded and ashamed of their light, in consequence of the far greater light and splendour of His person? The glory of the moon is but borrowed; that of the sun is imparted by Christ himself; but the glory of the person of Jesus is inherent. It is essential to Him. And when the King shall sit upon the throne of His glory, the light of His person will far surpass the splendour of the noonday sun. There is no need to suppose that by the sun and the moon we are to understand the rulers and potentates of the earth, and that the honour of Jesus will exceed theirs, and that this is all that the prophet means by such striking language. How much more natural and common-sense-like it is to understand the passage just as it reads, and to believe that when our Lord enters upon the kingship of earth He will not appear as the humble messenger of mercy, as in days past,

when He walked in sorrow through the streets of Zion and wept over her sad state, but that He will appear in His glory!

This view of this prophecy helps us to understand two other prophecies which must also be taken in their literal meaning so as to see their force and their beauty. Moses predicts that the whole earth—or whole land of Judea—shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. (Num. xiv. 21.) And the Prophet Habakkuk predicts that the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. (Hab. ii. 15.) The expression "the glory of the Lord," in the Old Testament, invariably means the visible appearance of the Lord in some glorious form,—as the Shechinah of old. From these prophecies, then, we learn that the glory of the person of Christ will be so resplendent as to fill the whole land of Israel, and that the knowledge of the existence of that glory—residing in Jerusalem and before His ancient people Israel, restored to the favour of the Lord and to their own land—will fill the whole habitable earth.

By Mount Zion and Jerusalem in this prophecy we cannot understand heaven; for Jesus reigns there now, and ever has reigned there. He is to reign before His ancients, or His ancient or former people, the Jews. But are there no Gentiles to be in heaven? If so, why say "before His ancients," and not also "before the Gentiles redeemed"? The simple reason is, Jesus comes as the son of David, to raise up the tabernacle of David that has been thrown down, and to restore the breaches thereof. (Amos ix. 11.) And when He does so He will also confer upon Israel peculiar honours in his

kingdom which He will not confer upon others. They are now "Lo-ammi, not my people;" but then they will be the sons of the living God. (Hos. i. 9–11.) Then will they acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah, who will reign in a visible, glorious, personal manner over the house of Jacob, and over the whole earth for evermore.

Zephaniah (iii. 14–20) contains another prophecy of the visible personal presence of our Lord during the millennium. The prophet says, "Sing, O daughter of Zion: shout, O Israel: be glad and rejoice with all thy heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. For the Lord hath taken away thy judgments, He hath cast out thine enemy. The King of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee; thou shalt not see evil any more."

This surely refers to the literal Israel alone, who are to be brought from beyond the rivers of Cush. "Atharee, the daughter of Rutzai, shall bring mine offering," (see the Hebrew;) or, as in our rendering, "My suppliants, the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering." It is also after their future restoration that they are not to see evil any more. The King of Israel is the Lord, who shall be "in the midst of them." This is Jesus the Messiah. Their conversion to God is spoken of in the thirteenth verse:—"The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies." This prediction plainly teaches that when the Lord's judgment on Israel for their sins shall be passed, their enemies will be cast out of their land, their iniquity will be pardoned, and they shall see evil no more, for the Lord will be in the midst of them. That will be only during the millennial

reign of the Messiah, when He shall dwell on earth as King of Israel, reigning before His ancients in Jerusalem gloriously.

The Prophet Zechariah (ii. 10–12) is equally explicit in his declaration of the future coming of the Messiah to reign personally in Jerusalem. "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for lo! I COME, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people; and I WILL DWELL IN THE MIDST of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee; and the Lord shall inherit Judah, his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again. Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord; for He is raised up out of his holy habitation."

It is impossible for language more plainly to teach the personal presence of the Lord Jesus again among His people Israel in Jerusalem than this does. He is now absent bodily. He will return again. He will dwell with them in the Holy Land, being *sent* by the Lord of hosts. They will be turned to the Lord, and many nations will be joined to them. All this is future, and can be understood only of the Saviour's return to His ancient people and of His dwelling in their midst. And when he does so, well may all flesh keep silent before God.

Again: the same prophet adds, (viii. 3,) "Thus saith the Lord: I am *returned* unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts, the holy mountain." This mountain of the Lord's house, we learn from Isaiah ii. 2, is to be exalted above

all the hills in and around about Jerusalem. When we speak of returning to a place, it conveys the idea that we have been there before, and that we have been absent from it for a season. And when our Lord says He will return to Zion and dwell there, the plain meaning of His language is that He was there once, and that He is now absent from it. To say that the Lord is absent from his Church is not according to truth; hence *Zion* cannot possibly mean the Church. He has never left the Church, and cannot be said to return to it; for He is in the Church by His Spirit's presence, and He always will be. But when we apply these words to the personal bodily presence of Jesus, how truthful and how appropriate are they! Yes; Jesus was in Zion; there He was crucified. He is now absent from that city, which has become unfaithful. Murderers now dwell in it; her princes are rebellious and the companions of thieves. (Isaiah i. 21–23.) In human nature He has been in Zion; His coming back again in human nature will be a "return," and the fulfilment of the prophecy which declares, "I am returned to Zion." When He comes and takes up His abode there, He will produce a thorough change in the moral character of the people who shall dwell in it. The city shall again be called "the city of truth; it is no more to be made desolate; the Lord will dwell there; there will then be old men and old women dwelling in the streets of Jerusalem, yea, the streets of the city shall be full of boys and of girls playing in the streets thereof." If any one should say, "This cannot be done: it would be too marvellous an

event to take place," "Thus saith the Lord of hosts: behold, I will save my people from the east country and from the west country, [from Asia and Europe and America,] and I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness." Isa. viii. 7, 8.

Passages of Scripture such as the following have a meaning when taken in their literal sense, and prove conclusively that the Saviour will return and dwell again in Zion. But, taken in a spiritual sense, they are stripped of their force and appropriateness.

Psalm cii. 13–16: "When the Lord shall build up Zion, *He shall appear* in His glory."

Psalm cxxxv. 21: "Blessed be the Lord out of Zion, *who dwelleth at Jerusalem.*"

In the first of these passages it is promised that, when the time to favour Zion shall come, the Lord's servants shall take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof,—that the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord. This will be at the restoration of Israel to their own land. Then will the Lord cause Zion to be rebuilt; and when He does so "He will appear in His glory," not, as formerly, in humility, but in his own glory. And then shall He *dwell* at Jerusalem. He will no more be a mere sojourner, but a dweller, at Jerusalem. To dwell *at* Jerusalem cannot mean to dwell in the Church spiritually, which He has always done, but at the City of the Great King. The *place*, and not the *people*, are spoken of here.

Joel ii. 27: "And ye shall know that *I am in the*

midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God, and none else; and my people shall never be ashamed."

Joel iii. 17–21: "So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God, *dwelling in Zion*, my *holy mountain;* then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more. . . . But Judah shall dwell forever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation. For I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed; *for the Lord dwelleth in Zion.*"

These blessings will not be enjoyed by Israel until after their return, and until after the Lord shall have gathered all nations into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and shall have poured out His judgments upon them. "For there will He sit to judge all the heathen round about." (Joel iii. 12.) Then will "the Lord be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel." He will be their present help: for the Lord dwelleth in Zion.

In the prophecy of Zechariah, chap. xiv., we have a prediction of the future coming of our Lord, that seems more like a history than a prophecy. The prophet speaks of the restoration of Israel to Palestine, and of their being attacked by the confederated Gentile nations. These nations constitute the army of Gog and Magog so particularly described by Ezekiel. In their deep distress, when the city is taken, the houses rifled, helpless women abused, and half the inhabitants taken captive, then the Lord promises them speedy and permanent deliverance. The prophet adds, "Then shall the *Lord go forth* and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. And *His feet*

shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof towards the east and towards the west, and there shall be a very great valley, and half the mountain shall remove towards the north, and half of it towards the south: and the Lord my God shall come, and *all the saints with thee*, [Him.]" Zech. xiv. 3–5.

It is impossible for language more explicitly to foretell the actual personal coming of our Lord than this. To make Jerusalem to be the Church, and these armies her enemies,—the mountain, some difficulty,—the earthquake and the flight and the captivity, the rifling of the houses and the abusing of the women, to be merely figurative language, descriptive of some great trouble to the Church, and her deliverance by the Spirit of God and of His gospel,—is to trifle with the word of God, and shamefully to pervert the words of the Most High. There is no spiritual advent here. The language is plain, and need not be misunderstood. Taken in its plain and obvious sense, this prophecy declares to us one of those most glorious and thrilling scenes by which the kingdom of our Lord is to be ushered in.

The Prophet Ezekiel (chaps. xxxvii.–xxxix.) describes most minutely the condition of the Israelites after their return and settlement in their own land. They will be there living in quiet and in peace, fearing no evil. Their villages will be unwalled, the very doors of their houses will be unbarred, and in the enjoyment of the favours of God they will be peaceful and happy. They will be in the possession of great wealth, consisting

of silver and gold and herds and flocks. This will excite the cupidity of the surrounding nations; they will make the attack for the avowed purpose of plundering them: they will succeed in part; and when God shall have chastened Israel fully for all their sins, then will He turn His hand against their foes. He will appear in person to Israel and to Israel's foes. Israel shall look upon Him whom their fathers pierced. They will acknowledge Jesus as their Messiah, and will weep in bitterness over all their past, personal, and national sins. The Lord will save the tents of Judah first. Then will He smite every horse with astonishment, and every rider with madness. The Lord will come, and all His saints with Him. His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives. Most probably it will be the very spot from which he arose and went to heaven in the sight of His gazing and wondering disciples. The sight of Jesus will fill his enemies with dismay. They will be utterly destroyed. Not one will escape. "The Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof." "The fish of the sea, the fowls of the heaven, the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are on the face of the earth, shall shake at *my presence*, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground." (Ezek xxxviii. 20.) "Thus will I magnify myself and sanctify myself, and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord." v. 23.

This awful judgment upon the nations will be followed by that happy and peaceful period when there shall be

no more utter destruction, but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited. Then "shall the Lord be King over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord and His name one. His saints will be with him." Surely, all this cannot be merely figurative. No, no; it is a blessed and glorious reality. "Jesus will take to Himself the power, and will reign, and His saints will reign with Him on the earth." Rev. v. 10.

Believing as the disciples did in the coming of their Lord to restore the kingdom to Israel, it is not at all surprising that they wished to know whether He would do it *then*. And no wonder that John closes his Revelation with the ardent prayer that Jesus would come quickly, saying, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." Yes; this same Jesus shall come, and so come in like manner as He was seen to go up into heaven. He went up bodily: He was seen to go up. He will return in His bodily presence: and when He comes every eye shall see Him, and all the tribes of the earth shall wail because of Him.

CHAPTER VIII.

POPULAR OBJECTIONS TO THE PERSONAL PREMILLENNIAL COMING OF OUR LORD ANSWERED.

THE objections which are made by many to the personal coming of our Lord before the millennium are drawn rather from the apparent *uselessness* of His coming, as it seems to them, than from any direct testimony of the Scriptures against it. We will examine some of these objections.

OBJECTION I. The Lord Jesus has His glorified body now in heaven, and can never return to this world in the flesh. He will return in spirit at the end of the world to the judgment.

To this we reply (1) The fact that Jesus has a glorified body in heaven does not destroy the *humanity* of His body. A human body may be glorified. The doctrine of the Presbyterian Church is "that the only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became *man*, and so was and *continueth* to be *God and man, in two distinct natures* and one person, forever." And this is the faith of all the Protestant Churches. Jesus is now as really a *man*, at the right hand of the Father, as ever He was when He trod our earth in the days of His humilation. He "makes intercession for us" by appearing "*in our nature continually* before the Father in heaven, in the merit of His obedience and sacrifice on earth." (Confession of Faith.)

And the Apostle Paul assures us that "He will appear the second time without a sin-offering unto salvation." (Heb. ix. 28.) The two men who stood in white apparel and spoke to the disciples as they stood gazing up into heaven, whither their Lord had just gone from their sight, assured them "that this same Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." (Acts i. 11.) These men, or angels, should know how He will come again. He went up in the human form, and He will come again in the human form, possessing the very body He had while upon earth. He will come, the Man Christ Jesus, and no other. But our Lord Himself expressly declares that He will come again:—"If I go and prepare a place for you, *I will come again*, and receive you to myself." (John xiv. 3.) And after His ascension He declares to the Church, through John, saying, "Surely I come quickly." (Rev. xxii. 20.) Why should we doubt it?

But will He come *in the flesh*, or in human nature? Most assuredly He will; for if He yet retains our nature He can come in no other way. But on this point the Apostle John is exceedingly plain. In writing to the Churches, the beloved apostle in his first epistle (chap. iv. 2, 3) says, "Hereby we know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ *having come* [*εληλυθοτα, eleluthota*] in the flesh is of God. And every spirit that confesseth not Jesus Christ *having come* in the flesh is not of God, and is that spirit of Antichrist whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now it is in the world."

The idea here is not the mere acknowledging *that* Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, but it is the confessing Him thus come as the Messiah, and putting faith in Him. This many of the Jews did, while the nation, as such, did not.

The same apostle in his second epistle, verse 7, tells us that "many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not Jesus Christ *about to come* [ερχομενον, *erchomenon*] in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an Antichrist."

In Rev. i. 4 we read "Grace to you, and peace, from Him who is, and who was, and *who is to come*," (*ho erchomenos.*) This is the true rendering of the Greek word *erchomenos.* It is found some thirty-six times in the New Testament, and is uniformly rendered correctly as a participle in the present tense, except in this one instance. Here our translators have taken the liberty, most unjustifiably, to put the word in the past tense, and to give it the same meaning as the perfect participle "is come" or "has come." Why they have done so it is hard to say. But the apostle surely does not mean to convey the same idea by the use of two different words. He affirms in his first epistle that those who do not confess Jesus Christ *having come* already in the flesh, as the Jews and others do not, are Antichrist, or opposed to Christ. In his second epistle he says that those who deny that Jesus Christ is again coming or *about to come* in the flesh are also Antichrist, or opposed to Christ.

Here we are taught (1) That our Lord will come again into this world; (2) That, when He does come, it will

be *in the flesh;* (3) And that those who deny Jesus Christ *about to come* in the flesh are Antichrist. The language of the apostle is plain, and is easy to be understood, if we will allow it to speak for itself. With such language as this looking them in the face, how can the ministers of Christ deny that their Lord is coming again, and coming, too, in human nature? There may be some excuse for those who depend on our English version of this passage for the true idea of the apostle; but surely there can be none for those who read the original, "Jesus is about to come in the flesh."

OBJECTION II. We can see no use of Christ Jesus coming again in human nature into our world.

This is one of the weakest objections to His coming that can be made. But it is a very common one. We may not be able to see or to comprehend the use of a great many things which have happened and yet may happen; but that is no solid objection to the necessity of their existence. It is not what we think is proper that is to be the rule of our faith, but what saith the Lord. If men are to set aside or to explain away the meaning of God's word because they cannot understand its meaning or see the special applicability or need of it in all cases, there is an end to all reasoning from the Scriptures. Our place is simply to believe and obey the word of the Lord, whether we can fully comprehend its import or not. Obedience is ours. God in due time will make His own word plain, and will reward us if faithful, as he did faithful Abraham in the matter of his son Isaac.

"We can see no use of His coming"! And must not our Lord return to fulfil His own promises to the Church,

merely because *we*, the creatures of the day, cannot see the necessity of it? But, if those who make this objection cannot see the necessity of His return, there are others who do. And, even if *we* could not understand the reasons of His conduct, our faith in His word should lead us to give up our objections and say, in the hoping language of the apostle, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

OBJECTION III. We do not need the personal presence of Christ on the earth. The Church has the Holy Spirit, and that is sufficient.

This objection is based upon a mistaken idea of the nature and the design of the present (the gospel) dispensation. It certainly is not the last dispensation with which the Church and the world are to be blessed. The Scriptures assure us that the affairs of this world are in the hands of Jesus as Mediator. All power is in his hands. All who have ever been renewed by the grace of God have been renewed by the Holy Spirit, through the intercession of the Lord Jesus. The work of salvation was carried forward as well before the incarnation of our Lord as since. And while He was upon the earth He saved sinners and sanctified them as well as now. His bodily absence from the earth is not necessary now, so that the Holy Spirit may remain upon the earth and be with the Church; for the Holy Spirit was with the Church before the incarnation and during the residence of our Lord on the earth, as well as since His ascension. But it was necessary that our Lord should return to the throne on High, to show that He had fulfilled His part of the great transaction in saving man, and that, having done all He had agreed to do, He might re-

ceive His title to that everlasting kingdom of which He is the King, and over which He, as the Son of man, is to reign when he returns. (Luke xix. 12–27.) It was necessary, then, for Him to depart, or the Holy Spirit could not remain on earth, and His special influences be imparted as confirmatory of His acceptance with the Father, and of His right to the kingdom. The Holy Spirit is now carrying forward the will of the Saviour, simply by taking the things of Christ and showing them to the Church, and by renewing and sanctifying the Church for those mansions which Jesus is now preparing for them. The Holy Spirit is the substitute for our Lord's presence during His temporary absence. But, when He returns, the Spirit will not then depart. On the contrary, He will still abide with the Church. We must not suppose, then, that it is better for our Lord to be absent from us in His bodily presence, because if He should return the Holy Spirit would be withdrawn. On the contrary, it would be better to have our Lord here, for then He as the visible Head of His Church, and the Holy Spirit of the Lord as the Sanctifier and Comforter, would both be present with the Church.

It is difficult to see what advantage it is to the Church to have the Head of it absent from it in His visible presence. Would He be less careful of its interests, or less concerned for the salvation and the holiness of His people, than He is now? Surely not. His absence is only a temporary one. But while He tarries, (and He will stay away until that be done,) the Church must preach the gospel to all the world for a witness unto them, so that the Gentile Church may be gathered in. When

that is done, and not before, our Lord will return. For He says to His Church, "Occupy till I come." And when He comes, He will reward His faithful servants, and will punish those who have not obeyed His commands nor loved His appearing.

OBJECTION IV. The return of the Lord Jesus to dwell upon this earth would be degrading Him from the high position He now occupies at the right hand of the Father. And as He is never again to suffer, or to be humbled in the sight of the universe, His return to reign upon the earth is anti-scriptural and impossible.

The premillennialist yields to no one in his high regard for the character and the honour of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The view he takes of the subject tends to exalt the Lord Jesus, and not to degrade or humble Him again. As this is the most plausible objection, and indeed the only one that has any force in it, it demands a full and satisfactory answer.

To this objection it may be replied, (1,) The God-Man Christ Jesus has, in His mediatorial character, three offices,—viz.: the offices of a Prophet, of a Priest, and of a King. He has exercised in humanity, upon the earth, the office of a Prophet and the office of a Priest. But he has never yet exercised the office of a King. He was born to be a King. He came to reign; but the world of sinners, Jews and Gentiles, instead of receiving Him as their King, united in the wicked and cruel work of crucifying Him. He is the rightful heir to the kingdoms of this world, but He Himself acknowledged that Satan is now the "prince of this world." He is so by *usurpation*, not by right; for the earth is the Lord's

and the fulness thereof. It is necessary, therefore, that the Lord Jesus should reign as King in humanity on the earth, or the prophecy concerning Him that "He shall build the temple of the Lord, He shall bear the glory, and He shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a *Priest upon his throne*," (Zech. vi. 13,) can never be fulfilled. His offices of Prophet, and Priest, and King, are all to be referred to His human nature, and not to His divine nature. He must be a King, then, in *human nature* and *on the earth*, or the Scriptures concerning Him cannot be fulfilled. He must come and reign.

2. Instead of its being a degradation to our Lord to return to this earth and to reign over it in righteousness and in peace, it will be great glory.

A proper view of this subject must convince any reasonable mind that it must be so.

Let us suppose for a moment that the inhabitants of some city or country, for some cause or other, no matter what, had become alienated from their chief magistrate. In the excitement of their feelings, they rose up, almost unanimously, and drove him away from his home, from his kindred, and from his friends. They confiscated his property and left him to provide for his temporal support as well as he could. They met together and prepared resolutions expressive of their bitterest feelings of hatred towards him and of all his official acts while he was in office. These resolutions they published to the wide world, so as to injure his character in the eyes of others, and to shut him out, if possible, from all intercourse with his fellow-men. This being done, they

then elected one of his bitterest foes in his stead. They rejoiced in their newly-chosen magistrate, and tried to forget the doings and the acts of their former one and their conduct towards him, and they thought that all now was well.

But, after the excitement of their passions had passed by, and reason had resumed her place, they saw that they had not only been deceived by giving credence to slanderous reports concerning the expelled one, but had also acted most wickedly towards him, and had treated him most shamefully and cruelly. They found that they had hated him "without a cause," and that it was the ambition and the cunning of their present magistrate that had led them to act so unworthily of themselves, and so ungratefully to their former magistrate, benefactor, and friend. Grieved at their conduct and deeply ashamed of all that they had done, a public meeting of all the citizens was called. The true statement of the case was laid before them. They confessed their sad mistake, and acknowledged how wickedly they had felt towards him. The old and the young wept together. The question then arose, What shall be done? One responds, Let us call back our former magistrate. Let us confess to him and to the wide world the wrong we have done; and let us place him over us and keep him there as long as he may live. One long loud AYE arose from the assembled multitude. A committee of the most honourable men of the city were chosen to call upon the exiled one and to bring him back. They went. They told him their errand. They confessed their wrong. He forgave the injury they had done him. He

returns with them. They depose their present magistrate and reinstate him. The multitudes of men and women and children unite in bewailing their past conduct and in pledging him assurances of their firm attachment and undying love. He enters upon the duties of his office, and during his life he governs them righteously, while they live in happiness and in peace.

Now, we ask, was not the deposition of this magistrate a deep disgrace both to the people and to him? But was not his restoration to his former office a great honour? Yea, was not the honour the *greater* in consequence of the great humiliation he had been compelled to endure? Surely it was. And the greater the indignities that had been heaped upon him the greater was his subsequent honour.

Let us apply this course of reasoning to the case of our blessed Lord.

Jesus is the rightful heir to the throne of His father David, as well as the heir of the world. He came to reign. Both Jews and Gentiles united with one heart in wickedly rejecting Him. They said, "We will not have this man to reign over us." They crucified Him as a malefactor, and sought in various ways to injure His pure and holy character. For eighteen hundred years He has borne this reproach from those He came to bless. But the day is coming (for the heart of Israel begins to relent) when Israel will say of Him, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." They will *look* upon Him whom they have pierced. They will mourn in bitterness over all their past conduct towards the son of David, their Messiah. They will acknow-

ledge Him as the King of Israel, as the King of the whole earth. He will sit upon the throne of His father David on Mount Zion. Jews and Gentiles will acknowledge His right to reign. They will welcome Him as the King of the whole earth and cheerfully submit to His will. Every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue shall confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Now, we would ask, will it be a degradation for our Lord to receive the willing homage of a *whole world*, who, having seen their errors, have confessed their sin and have acknowledged Him as King over all the earth? And will not the glory of our Lord be the greater in consequence of His previous humiliation? The same people who cast his name out as evil now, will with willing hearts exalt Him to the highest earthly glory. Jesus is now in heaven, an exile from earth in consequence of His rejection by the house of Israel and the world of sinners. But He is exalted at the right hand of the Father, while this earth is still in revolt against Him. Will it be a degradation to Him to have the homage of the whole world?—to have all the earth bow in sweet subjection to His will and His rule on earth as well as in heaven? Will it be a degradation to Him to appear on earth in all His glory and in the glory of His Father, attended by His holy angels and by all His saints and adored by a penitent world? Will it be a degradation for Him to have the angelic host "ascending and descending to the Son of man," (John i. 51,) and swift to do his will, while a world redeemed yield him their heartfelt adoration? Will it be a degrada-

tion to Him to cast out the curse utterly from earth,—to hurl the usurper Satan from the kingship of earth,—to overturn all the godless thrones and kingdoms of earth,—to restore peace universal between man and man, and also throughout all the animal world,—to cause the earth to yield her increase, and to fill the hearts of a world of sinners saved by grace with joy and gladness in the Lord, and then to reign over them in righteousness and peace for evermore? If it was no degradation for the *Kol Jehovah*, "The voice of the Lord," to dwell with Adam in Paradise,—if it was no degradation for the Son of man to appear to man on earth ofttimes before His incarnation in Bethlehem,—how can it be a degradation to him to bring back this revolted earth to its Eden beauty and to cause the whole family of man to praise the Lord with one consent?

We must confess we cannot see wherein this would in the least degree degrade or humiliate the Son of man; but, on the contrary, it will highly exalt him. He is not to come back to earth and to take part with the rulers or the ruled of this world in their opposition to God and to His glory. He is to bind Satan and to cast him into the bottomless pit. He is to restore the sceptre of earth to the hands of humanity again, where it belongs by gift from God. He is to redeem this whole earth from the curse forever. "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign, [a sign of the curse removed,] that shall never be cut off." (Isa. lv. 13.) Then shall Jesus be King over all the earth. (Zech. xiv. 9.)

"He shall judge the poor with righteousness, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins: they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. xi. 4–9.) Can this be humiliation or degradation? How can it be? No, no: it is glory and honour exalted.

The great difficulty in the minds of some is their supposing that our Lord will come back to this earth in humility as formerly, and that He will take to Himself the power, and reign over the wicked nations of this world, permitting their varied forms of government to continue as now. Many of them suppose also that the binding of Satan does not include the idea of his being *personally* cast out of this world, but only that his influence will be restrained for the space of a thousand years. But this is not the scriptural representation of the subject. The Bible teaches us that Satan is a personal being, an actual existence, and the prince of the power of the air. In consequence of his sin, he and his rebel hosts of angels were cast out of the immediate presence of God in heaven. He is not wholly deprived of all communication with the heavenly world, for he is yet "the accuser of the brethren" before God; but he is deprived of all communion with God's holy beings. The fallen angels have no intercourse with the heavenly world: they are confined to this earth and the surrounding atmosphere. Here they are kept until the coming of our Lord. Then, at His coming, He will first cast them out of the region of the air, and Satan also with them,

down to this earth. Here they will remain while Christ and His risen saints shall occupy the regions of the air; for, says the apostle, "we shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air." (1 Thess. iv. 17.) It is not proper that Satan or his rebel hosts should occupy the same place with Christ and His risen saints. During the time that Satan and his hosts shall be confined to this earth, the inhabitants of this world will experience unwonted distress. Hence says the Apostle John, (Rev. xii. 12,) "Rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell therein! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down to you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

How long Satan and his hosts shall remain on the earth to torment mankind, we know not. But the time will be short. An angel shall descend and bind Satan, and cast him and his hosts into the bottomless pit. Not one evil angel will then remain upon the earth or in the air for a thousand years to come. The world will at last be free from Satanic rule and from Satanic influence, and the government of the earth will pass into the hands of the Son of David, the Son of man, for evermore.

The judgments that will then fall upon the wicked nations will be such as have never yet been seen or known. The language of the Psalmist is, "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." (Ps. ii. 9.) The Prophets Ezekiel (xxxix.) and Zechariah, (xii.–xiv.,) and John, (Rev. xix.,) give us a full and particular account of the scenes of that great day. The stone in that day will fall upon the feet of the image and will grind it to powder. Not a

vestige of the governments of this world will remain. All of them will be swept away and for evermore. In that day the Lord will be King. He will put down all rule and all authority and power that emanate not directly from God; "for He must reign till He hath put all His enemies under His feet." (1 Cor. xv. 24, 25.) How then, it may be asked, is it possible for Jesus to be degraded or humbled by His reigning on earth under such circumstances? If it be no humiliation for Him to sit, as He does now, upon the throne of the Father, there waiting until the time comes for His enemies to be made His footstool, while He still carries on the work of intercession before the Father, it surely can be no act of humiliation for Him to take to Himself the power and sit upon *His own throne* (Rev. iii. 21) and sway the sceptre of righteousness and peace over this part of God's restored empire; for His will is to be done on the earth (ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς) as it is in heaven.

The truth is, the seat of God's government is to be transferred ultimately from the place it now is to this earth renewed. It is to this earth renewed that the New Jerusalem, in due time, is to descend, and here it is to remain. And Jesus is to dwell in the midst of His people for evermore. We should not be surprised at this. For what has been realized in part already will be fully realized hereafter. If Jesus, in His humiliation, dwelt upon our earth for thirty years, and carried on the government of the universe during that time, can it be judged an impossibility for Him to come in His glory, cast out Satan and sin, reclaim this prodigal world

from its wanderings from God, and bring it back in penitence at His feet, and He rule in it and over it in righteousness and in glory forever? Surely not. And when He assures us that "He will make a covenant of peace with His people Israel, that He will set His sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore, that He will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever, and that the name of the city in which He shall dwell shall be called *Jehovah Shammah*, the Lord is there," we must believe that it will be so. (Ezek. xxxvii. 26, xliii. 7, xlviii. 35.) Will all this be humiliating to our blessed Lord? Far from it. It will be the possession of the glory that is yet in store for our ascended Lord. It was in view of this glory that the holy seer could say, "Come, Lord Jesus: come quickly." And, with him, we too can say, "Amen: even so: come, Lord Jesus."

CHAPTER IX.

ANTICHRIST DESTROYED BY THE PERSONAL COMING OF OUR LORD.

On the subject of Antichrist the views of Protestant Christians differ in some degree. Some maintain that by Antichrist we are to understand the Papacy. Others hold that Antichrist is an individual, who is yet to appear, and who is to lead forward the opposition to Christ. Some think that he will be a Jew, and that he will arise out of the tribe of Dan. Time will soon

correct all our mistakes on this subject. But, after all, the difference in opinion on this point is not so great as at first sight it might seem to be.

Although the Papacy does acknowledge Christ to be the Son of God, and maintains His divine and human natures, yet, by the introduction of the worship of Mary, the mother of Jesus according to the flesh, the Papal Church has, in reality, arrayed herself against Christ, and justly deserves the name of Antichrist, or opposed to Christ.

The apostle calls it "the mystery of iniquity." And doubtless it is the best system that Satan has ever adopted for the hinderance of pure and evangelical truth in the world. The plan, we judge, is not original with Satan, the great adversary of God and man: he has stolen the idea from what he has seen of God's dealings with His Church, and from what he knows will be his plan of governing the Church and the world in the millennial age.

The whole Jewish economy was of divine arrangement. The ceremonies were grand and of the most imposing and impressive character. They were rendered especially so by a visible and mysterious manifestation of a present Deity. The system was designed then to keep the people separate from the nations among whom they might dwell. And although that dispensation has been succeeded by another, still, the Israelites are kept by its now unglorious rites and ceremonies nearly as distinct and as separate from the rest of mankind as ever they were.

But the grand idea exhibited in Judaism is yet to be

developed in the coming age. That dispensation will be distinguished by the personal presence of the Man Christ Jesus as the visible Head both of the Church and of the governments of this world. In Judaism the theocratic form of government, both in Church and State, appeared for a season. It will be revived in all its glory; it will be characterized, not by the symbolical presence of the Messiah in the Shechinah, but by the visible and personal presence of the Lord of glory, of Himself, as the head of His Church and as King over all the earth.

As the Jews rejected the Messiah both as the King of Israel and as the Head of the Church, a new dispensation has, of necessity, been introduced for the time-being. But it will be succeeded ere long "by the dispensation of the fulness of the times," when all things both which are in the heavens and which are on the earth shall be headed up in Christ. Eph. i. 10.

Satan has been a close observer of the plans of God and of His dealings with the Church and with the world. And, although always defeated when brought into conflict with the superior wisdom of God, he has nevertheless grown wiser, in his plans of deceiving mankind, by the very defeats he has experienced. He has seen the wonderful influence of the Jewish ritual and worship, connected with the idea of the theocracy, to bind the people together and to keep them so, and, knowing, as he certainly does, that Jesus will ultimately reign as King over all the earth, as He is now King of saints, and that Judaism will exist until it be utterly supplanted by the reign of the Messiah, Satan has shaped his plans

accordingly. He has taken the cast-off mantle of Judaism, and, wrapping it around the body of a world-wedded Christianity, has endeavoured to give the Church and the world, in Popery, a substitute for the kingdom and the glory that are to bless the world under the peaceful reign of the Prince of peace. Hence it is that the Pope assumes supreme power not only in the Church, but endeavours to claim the same also in the State. Satan, however, still holds his usurped power over this world, and still claims that he is "the prince of this world," while he deceives the Papacy with the false idea that the power over all the earth is ultimately to be in her hands, and causes her to strive for it. The Pope claims now supremacy in the Church. Thus, he seeks to hold, and professes to hold, that place in the Church and in the world which the Son of man will ultimately hold in the Church and in the world. It is this which makes Popery so attractive to its votaries. It gratifies the pride and the ambition of its followers, and suits its teachings and doctrines and ceremonies to the appetites and passions and love of show that are found in the human heart. It stands thus opposed to Christ, and will continue to stand so until Jesus shall come and take the place in the Church and the world which the Papacy now claims to hold.

There is nothing in the mere spreading of the gospel throughout the world that can supply the place of Christ as a visible head in the Church and the world. The presence of the Holy Spirit, now during the temporary absence of the bodily presence of our Lord, will not do it. Even if all now should become holy, who would

control the governments of earth, and who would be the umpire in the Church? Would all the forms of government be merged into one? And what form would that be? Would all the Church organizations become one? And what form would that assume? The Papacy professes to mark that out for itself, and hence it seems to be destined, in the very nature of the case, to exist until the Lord Himself shall come and be Head over all things both in the Church and in the world. The system of Popery is, in this view of the subject, essentially Antichrist, and can be destroyed only by Christ's coming and His being in reality what the Pope of Rome, in his arrogance, professes to be,—viz.: the visible head of the Church on earth.

The passage in 2 Thess. ii. 8 doubtless refers to the personal Antichrist and that system of iniquity which began its workings in the apostles' days, and which is to be destroyed by the personal coming of our Lord. Popery is the body and soul of this system; but, before its overthrow, it will attract to itself all that is corrupt in the various branches of the Protestant Church, and will be guided and controlled by one visible head. That person may be the Pope, or one in the priesthood or out of it. But, whoever the person may be, he will be possessed by Satan, and will be as really an incarnation of Satan as Jesus is an incarnation of Deity. But, whatever may be the peculiar form that the mystery of iniquity will then assume, it will be destroyed by the brightness of the coming of the Son of man.

The word *epiphaneia* (rendered *brightness*, or appearing) occurs but six times in the New Testament. The

word *parousia* (*coming*) occurs twenty-four times. A reference to the places where the word *epiphaneia* occurs—viz.: 1 Tim. vi. 14; 2 Tim. 1–10, iv. 1, 8; Titus ii. 13; 2 Thess. ii. 8—will show that the word always means a personal appearance of the object to which it relates; and, when applied to the Saviour, it invariably refers to His glorious appearance. The word *parousia* always means a literal coming of the person or thing referred to.

As this is the invariable meaning of the word, we are certainly justified in maintaining that this form of iniquity is to be destroyed by the personal coming of our Lord in His bodily presence. We say bodily presence, because He has never been absent from the Church in Spirit, and that cannot be returned which has never been taken away. The Church has always had the Spirit of Christ with it, according to the promise:—"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," or, rather, to the completion of the age or dispensation. (Matt. xxviii. 20.) But our Lord, in His visible bodily presence, is absent from the Church and from the world, and it is that which is to be restored to the Church. This return will be sudden and unexpected to the world. And when He does come (not before) He will destroy "that wicked one" whose coming is after the working of Satan or according to Satanic direction. As this destruction is to be by the *second coming* of our Lord, it is evident that He must come BEFORE the millennium: if not, then we are shut up to the necessity of maintaining that Popery, this mystery of iniquity, will remain to blight the Church and the world down to the end of time. It will exist

until the Lord comes, for it is to be destroyed by His coming. If He come *before* the millennium, then Popery will be destroyed *before* the millennium. But if he come not till the end of the world, in the usual acceptation of that expression, then the world will be cursed by the personal presence of Satan, and by the existence of this form of iniquity, down to the end of time! Surely this cannot be.

The Prophet Daniel (chap. vii. 21, 22) speaks of a little horn that arose up from among the horns of the fourth beast, and that this horn or power made war against the saints and prevailed against them until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most high, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. This little horn or power is, by general consent of Protestant expositors, and by some also in the Romish Church, applied to the priesthood of the Church of Rome. There seems to be no manner of doubt of the correctness of this application. This power is to afflict the saints of the Most High until the Ancient of days come. This coming cannot possibly refer to the first coming of our Lord, for this power did not come into existence until more than five hundred years after our Lord's incarnation. As it is to prevail until His second coming, it is plain that the Papacy, in some form or other as a persecuting power, will exist until destroyed by the personal coming of our Lord. And, as already remarked, if that coming be delayed to the final judgment of the quick and the dead, then we see not how the conclusion is to be avoided that Popery must exist on earth to the final day. But this cannot

be; for the kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever. (Rev. xi. 15.) He is to sit upon His holy hill of Zion, (Psalm ii. 6,) and there is to be nothing to hurt or to offend in all His holy mount, for the earth (or land) shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord. Isaiah xi. 9.*

The destruction of this Antichristian power as described in Rev. xviii. and xix. shows us that it will be done not by the silent influences of the gospel, but by some visible manifestation of the Son of God Himself. The description there given precludes the idea that it is to be accomplished by the force of truth and the persuasive influence of the gospel. Satan will not thus yield up the government of this world, which he has held by usurped power now for so many thousand years. There will be inroads made upon the spiritual empire of Satan in this world through the preaching of the gospel; and out of this world God will gather a people for His name, (Acts xv. 14;) but the overthrow of the governmental power of Satan and the complete annihilation of his kingdom on the earth will be reserved for the Son of man Himself,—not through the agency of His people, but by His own glorious appearance and coming. Then will Satan, who has overcome man and has kept him in bondage for the past six thousand years, be himself overcome by man in the person of the Lord of Glory, the Man Christ Jesus. Humanity has now for

* The reader will find some excellent thoughts on this subject in a work on the second coming of our Lord by Ben. Ezra, translated from the Spanish by the Rev. Edward Irving, of London.

these past ages been kept down by Satanic power, but ere long Satanic power and influence will be put down by man, in the person of our Lord and Saviour. Human nature will be exalted yet to its proper standing on the earth, and will retain it evermore.

CHAPTER X.

THE BINDING OF SATAN.

THERE are not a few who deny the personal existence of Satan. They maintain that by Satan is meant only that principle of evil that is manifested in man, and if all men felt and acted aright there would be no Satan. Such persons of course have to reject the plain teachings of the Scriptures on this subject before they can arrive at such a conclusion. But not only must they deny the testimony of the Scriptures on this subject, but also the universal belief of all mankind. It is, however, not the first time that persons have denied their father and have felt ashamed of their pedigree.

The absurdity of the idea that Satan is only the evil principle in fallen man is manifest from the fact that our Lord was tempted forty days and forty nights by the devil in the wilderness of Judea. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. There was no sin in Him, for He was without sin. It was impossible for Him to be tempted by an evil disposition in Him, when no such disposition existed.

Those who are willing to follow the teachings of the

word of God on this, and on all subjects on which it treats, arrive at one and the same conclusion in reference to Satan. From the Scriptures we learn,—

1. That there are many evil spirits in and around this world, who have been cast out of the immediate presence of God for their sins, and are now reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. Jude 6.

2. That these evil spirits have a king over them, or a head, whom the Scriptures call by the names of Abaddon, Apollyon, a Destroyer, Beelzebub, the Prince of the Demons, an Adversary, the Dragon, the Old Serpent, the Devil, and Satan. See Matt. xii. 22; Mark iii. 22–27; Luke ii. 14–22; Rev. ix. 11, xx. 2, 7, 10.

3. These evil spirits rove at large within certain limits. Probably they do not pass beyond the limits of our atmosphere. This may be to them as a prison where they are kept until they shall be cast into the lake of fire. Within these limits, if permitted, they may do much evil.

4. These evil spirits are conscious beings. They had the power in days past to take possession of the bodies of men and of animals. They could deprive individuals of the use of their speech and hearing and limbs, and could in various ways torment them. Many of them could take possession of one human body and could keep possession of it even against the will of the individual thus possessed. They have the power to do so still. And the world is full of evidences that demoniacal possessions have continued to be manifested from the days of the apostles down to the present time. And we have reason to believe that they will continue here until the

Son of man shall cast them and their prince out of the world forever.

5. These evil spirits were held by many in former times to be the souls of departed men, while others believed them to be those evil spirits who were cast out of heaven, and who are an order of beings wholly distinct from men.

Hesiod, who lived about B.C. 900, tells us that "in the golden age, when Saturn reigned in heaven, men lived like gods, free from evils, and died just as if they had fallen asleep, [τοι μεν Δαιμονς εεισι, &c.] They became demons, by the will of Jupiter the Great, powerful, dwelling upon the earth, guards of mortal men; they observe the good and the evil done here; they are clothed with air, [invisible,] and roam over the earth everywhere; they are innumerable, the immortal guards of mortal men." Hesiod, *Opera*, i.

According to this idea, the souls of men after their departure from this world became the inspectors of human affairs, and, as they dispensed good to mankind, they were called demons. But other writers make these demons "the dispensers of evil things as well as good to mankind," (η μεριξειν τα αγαθα και χακα τοις ανθρωποις,) the plagues and the terrors of men, and the authors of much evil. See Proclus, in *Hesiod. Euseb. Præp. Ev.* lib. iii. c. 5.

Homer makes Minerva, after she had advised Achilles to lay aside his anger against Agamemnon, "retire to heaven, to the palace of the ægis-bearing Jupiter and to the other demons." The Scholiast says "that he calls the gods demons, either as knowing all things, or

distributing all things (both good and bad) to men." He also calls them "such as are removed from this life."

But this is not the opinion of all the learned among the ancient heathen whose ideas on these subjects have reached us. Thales, the famous Greek philosopher, who died B.C. 548, held that demons are spiritual beings who never had been embodied as men. He divides the deities into three classes,—viz.: gods, demons, and heroes. He considers God (*θεος*) the *mind* of the world; the demons are spiritual beings (*ψυχικαι*;) and the heroes are the souls of men; of these, the good are divine, the bad are vile, (*φαυλοι.*) This account of the views of Thales we get from Athenagoras, a Christian apologist. Athenag. *Leg. Christ.* p. 25.

Plato, (B.C. 348,) it is said, refused to give any opinion on the origin of demons, as it was a matter "above his comprehension."

It is opposed to the doctrine of Judaism to hold that demons are the souls of departed men, and yet it is probable that some of the Jews did embrace that idea. Josephus says that "the demons are the souls of evil men." (*Daimonia tauta ponerōn estin anthrōpōn pneumata.*) (Jos. *de Bello Jud.* lib. vii. c. 23.) This seems to be the correct translation of the words; but whether he held that they were the spirits of bad men having entered into the bodies of others, or that these demons were spirits possessing evil men, we shall not decide. The former idea would be contrary to his faith as a Pharisee; and yet he might have believed it.

The great body of the primitive Christians doubtless held that demons were evil spirits. Justin Martyr, who

died A.D. 165, in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, says that "the gods of the heathen are demons," (*Daimones eisi oi theoi tōn ethnōn.*) This is the Greek translation of Ps. xcvi. 5. In speaking of Satan's deceiving our first parents, he calls him *ho misanthropos Daimon*, "the man-hating demon." It would seem from this use of the word that he held these demons to be evil spirits, a distinct class of beings from the souls of departed men.

Tatian, a Christian writer of the same age, says expressly that "the demons who govern men are not the souls of men," (*ouk eisin ai tōn anthropon psuchai.*) (*Orat. cont. Græcas*, p. 154.) And on a previous page of the same tract (p. 148) he says of demons that "they were ejected from the heavenly life;" that is, that they are fallen angels, (*ekbletoi tes en ourano diaites gegenemenoi.*)

Theophilus Antiochus, who was contemporary with Tatian, says (lib. ii. *ad Autolyc.* p. 104) that he who tempted Eve in Paradise was "that mischievous demon who is also called Satan," (*ho kakopoios Daimon, ho kai Satan kaloumenos.*) He could not possibly hold that this demon was the soul of a dead man of the human race, when as yet none of them had died.

Tertullian, who lived at the close of the second century, held that these "demons were invisible beings, endued with spiritual power, living in the air, attending on particular persons, and doing them good or evil. They inflict upon men's bodies diseases, and various grievous afflictions. They are the occasion of men going suddenly and extraordinarily mad. The subtlety and fineness of their nature enables them to enter into the bodies and

the souls of men. Being spirits, they have great power. They can act though they are invisible and incapable of being felt, and you must judge by the effect upon men, rather than by their act, which is invisible." He does not maintain that these demons are the souls of departed men, for he calls them *substantias quasdam spiritales*, "certain spiritual substances," while he defines the human soul to be "*corporalis*," material. He also makes the demons to be the authors of the fall of man. Tertul. *Apol. adv. Gent.* c. 22, *de Anima* c. 11, 12.

St. Cyprian held that "they were evil spirits, who inspired the hearts of the heathen prophets, who are the authors of oracles, who creep into men's bodies, destroy their health and cause diseases." Cypr. *de Idol.*

Arnobius says that "the name of Jesus once heard puts the evil spirit to flight, silences the prophets, and makes the diviners foolish." Arnob. *adv. Gent.* lib. i. § 46, p. 74, ed. 1844.

Lactantius, following his preceptor, says, "Let there be set before us one who, it is certain, is possessed by a demon, and the Delphic priest or prophet: we shall see them both in the same manner terrified at the name of God, and Apollo will with the same haste depart out of his prophet as the spirit will out of the demoniac." Lac. *de Vera Sap.* lib. iv.

Eusebius says that "the heathen prophecies and oracles proceed from evil spirits." Lib. v. c. 4.

It is evident, from these quotations, that many, and perhaps the great majority, of the fathers, held that the demoniacs were not possessed by the souls of departed men, but by evil spirits distinct from men.

These demons were then, as they are now, subject to the name and authority of Jesus of Nazareth.

Theophilus of Antioch says, "Demoniacs are sometimes even to this day exorcised in the name of the Living God, and these deceitful spirits confess themselves to be demons." P. 108.

Irenæus says, "Some certainly and truly eject demons; insomuch that those who are thus healed and cleansed are often converted to the faith, and remain in the Church." P. 108.

Origen says, "So great is the power of the name of Jesus against demons, that it has success even when named by wicked persons, as Jesus taught, saying, 'Many shall say unto me in that day, Have we not cast out demons [*daimonia*] in thy name,' &c. (Matt. vii. 22.) It is plain that Christians use none of the arts of enchanters, but the name of Jesus Christ." (Orig. *cont. Cel.* lib. i.) The case of the sons of Sceva the Jew, and their endeavouring to exorcise an evil spirit by the name of Jesus, is confirmatory of the remark of Origen. Acts xix. 13–18.

Cyprian, in writing to Demetrianus, the Proconsul of Africa, a bitter enemy of the Christians, says, "Oh that you would hear and see the gods of the Gentiles, when they are adjured by us, and tormented by our spiritual scourges, and cast out of the bodies they possessed by the force of our words, when, crying out and lamenting with a human voice, and feeling the strokes of a divine power, they confess the judgment to come."

And Lactantius says that the spirits adjured by the name of God depart out of bodies:—"How great a

terror this sign is to demons must be known by any one who will see how, being adjured by Christ, they fly out of the bodies they possessed. For as Christ himself, when He lived among men, cast out all demons by His word, and restored to their former senses men whose minds were distracted by the assaults of evil spirits, so do His followers now cast the same impure spirits out of men, both in the name of their Master and by the sign of His passion." *De Vera Sap.* lib. iv. c. 27.

Justin Martyr says, "Every demon being adjured by the name of Christ is conquered and is obliged to submit." P. 107.

It is evident, then, that for the first three centuries of the Christian era the Christian Church did believe that evil spirits not only could, but actually did, possess, at times, the bodies of men. And not only so; but they also had the power to cast them out of the bodies of men, by calling upon the name of Christ and by His authority.

However men may differ in their views concerning these evil spirits, the writers of the New Testament have but one opinion in reference to them,—viz.: that they are not the souls of departed men, but that they are evil spirits,—a class of evil beings entirely distinct from the souls of men. Our Lord often cast them out of the bodies of men, and so did His disciples. The power of exorcising evil spirits, it is probable, remained with the Church long after the other miraculous gifts had ceased.*

* To say that these demons (*daimonai*) were diseases is the greatest absurdity imaginable; for what disease had our Lord when tempted for forty days and nights? How could diseases speak and ask Jesus if he had come to torment them before the time? How

A question here arises:—Do demoniacal possessions still exist in the world, or were they confined to the time of our Lord's appearance upon the earth and to the apostolic period? Our views of this subject may not accord with those which are held by others; but we hesitate not to declare our opinion that demoniacal possessions have existed in our world ever since there was a devil here to possess men and sinful men to be possessed by him, and that they will continue to be manifested more or less until Satan and all his rebel hosts shall be cast out of this world by the power of the Son of man. The solemn fact that Satan is the prince of this world, according to our Lord's declaration, is one which is not properly considered by the Church of Christ. Being the prince of this world and the ruler of the powers of the air, and having the power and the will to afflict the human race, he will do so if the Lord permit him. We see his power, and what he would do when permitted, fully manifested in the cases of Job, of Ahab, of Saul, and of the demoniacs in the day of our Lord's incarnation. Satan is still unbound. He is as a roaring lion, going about seeking whom he may destroy. He has, doubtless, in some way, access to the heavenly world, (though he has no communion with God;) for he is the accuser of the brethren, who accuses them before God day and night. (Rev. xii. 10.) He has always been such, ever since there were any of the Lord's redeemed in the world of spirits whom he could accuse.

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could they enter swine and terrify them and drive them to destruction? They can be nothing else than fallen angels.

From the known character of Satan and of the evil spirits who are under his control, we cannot suppose that he and they would limit their influence upon the souls and bodies of men to the time of our Lord's personal residence on the earth. We have not the record of their proceedings either before or after that event, nor of the cases that may have been healed by the power of faith since the days of the apostles; and hence we cannot tell how great their influence over the world in this respect may still be, or what multitudes, even now, may be labouring under demoniacal possessions. It is true that during the short ministry of our Lord on this earth we have a true record of more cases of demons being cast out from the bodies of men, women, and children than in all the previous or subsequent history of our world. But this is no argument to prove that possessions were not of frequent occurrence both before and after our Lord's incarnation. The ejection of evil spirits by our Lord tended most powerfully to convince the house of Israel that Jesus was the Messiah, and to prove to the Gentile world that He was the promised seed who it was predicted should bruise the serpent's head. And hence it was peculiarly proper that our Lord should in that way show that He was stronger than the strong man armed, and that the demons were subject to His word. As that manifestation of His power has been made, and as He is now at the right hand of the Father, there is at present not the same necessity for His power to be exerted in casting them out,—certainly, not for the same purpose. But this does not prove that demoniacal possessions are not

now as frequent as ever they were. If they do not now exist, it will be difficult to account for the varied manifestations of evil that have for ages past been witnessed both in Christian and especially in Pagan lands.

That the present manifestations of spiritualism throughout the world are nothing more or less than demoniacal influences, or possessions in the New Testament idea of possessions, must be apparent to any one who will carefully compare the accounts we have of them with the scriptural narrative of similar cases, and with the predictions of the apostles in reference to them in the latter days. The Apostle Paul, in 1 Tim. iv. 1, leaves on record this remarkable revelation for the warning of the Church:—"Now, the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines (or teachings) of demons." This makes known the fact that these demons or evil spirits, under the control of Satan, will through their teachings produce an apostasy from the faith, or a rejection of the revelation that God has given us,—at least on the part of some. As the whole world lieth in the hand or in the power of the wicked one, and are of course aliens from God, and as some of those who profess to hold the truth as revealed in the Sacred Scriptures shall depart from it, it would seem that this new manifestation of Satanic power is likely to have a fearful sway on earth before Satan shall be cast out of it. And this is in accordance with the teachings of the Bible on the subject. Satan will not resign his power here while he can maintain it. And, as he certainly knows the time when he and

his hosts of evil angels shall be cast out of this world, he will manifest great wrath towards mankind, from the fact that he knows he has but a short time longer in which he can exercise his power over them.

Our Lord came to destroy the works of the devil. He is the propitiation not for our sins only, but for the whole world. He is the rightful Heir to the throne of His father David, and He is also the Heir of all things. This world is His by right of redemption as well as by right of creation, and in due time He will, as the Prince of peace, cast out Satan the usurper and take to Himself the power and reign. When our Lord was on earth, some of those evil spirits whom He cast out of the bodies of men, though not out of the world, confessed that they knew Him, and asked with trembling if He "had come to torment them before the time." That was not the time, and they knew it. But the time is now nigh at hand when they will be cast out from this earth, and never more shall they be permitted to enter it. They shall be cast into the lake of fire. But Satan himself will first be merely bound for a thousand years, and then be loosed for a little season, before he himself shall be cast into the lake of fire with them.

That Satan will make special efforts to deceive mankind and to keep possession of this world is only what we might expect. But he must relinquish his hold on this earth and his sway over man upon it. He knows that his time is short. When he and his hosts of evil spirits shall be cast down from the heavens to the earth, there will be great rejoicing in the heavens; but there will be great distress on the earth in consequence

of it. The language of the prophet is, "Rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell therein." But "Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea, for the devil is come down to you, having great wrath, for he knoweth he hath but a short time." (Rev. xii. 12.) As Satan knows that the time he will remain on the earth will be but short after his detrusion from the heavens, and as he also knows that it will not be long before that event will take place, he is now by his Satanic delusions preparing the minds of the people of the world to receive him in all the fulness of his powerful workings. And not only so, but he is preparing the people throughout the world to reject those new manifestations of God's goodness to our race which will be made before the full ushering in of the millennial glory of the Church and of the world.

It is most evident from the Bible that the manifestations of miraculous powers will again be seen on the earth. The dead will be raised, the saints will be caught up to meet their Lord, angels will again descend to earth, and the familiar intercourse that once existed between the angelic world and this will certainly be restored, for "angels shall ascend and descend to the Son of man," (John i. 51,) and these heavenly visits will not be, as now, "few and far between." Satan knows all this; and hence, by his mock miracles and pretended revelations, he is preoccupying the minds of the people and preparing them to reject the miracles that God will work for His people, and also the new revelations of the future that God may make known to man. Satan did once, and he can again, transform him-

self into the appearance of an angel of light, so that all who are not savingly illumined will be deceived by him. He is now shaking the faith of the people in the word of God, and is causing them to depend on his revelations from the spirit-world, which purport to be directly from departed saints, and even from Christ Himself. He is imitating the death and the resurrection of the saints, and is also imitating that most glorious event, the rapture of the saints, by lifting up and carrying persons through the air. It surely must be something more then a human power that could induce in this land alone, in the short space of a few years, more than two millions of persons to reject the word of God as a revelation from Him, and, instead of it, to put their faith in the revelations of Satan made to them through rappings, and voices, and visions, and writings of mediums under the control of spirit-power.

The character of these manifestations shows most clearly that they come from Satan. They are not the result of physical laws of which the world has hitherto been ignorant, nor are they the tricks of men. Men may endeavour to imitate them for the sake of gain and for the sake of a name among their fellows; but this, we judge, is seldom done, and when done can easily be detected. There is mind in connection with these manifestations; nor is that mind a human one,—certainly not an embodied mind on earth. These manifestations are not confined to one portion of the world. They are everywhere, in all lands. And wherever declarations have been made in reference to the great and fundamental truths of the Bible through those who are con-

trolled by spirit-power, they show a oneness of character which clearly reveals that they are the products of one mind, and that mind not human. Everywhere and under all circumstances the divine character of Jesus Christ is fully and unequivocally denied. The highest and most noble traits of human excellence are freely awarded Him, but He is robbed of His divinity. The necessity of an atonement for sin is denied, and the word of God, which declares that Jesus has made such an atonement for the sins of men, is rejected as a book written by fallible men, and that all the ideas contained in that book are those of men and not of God. These revelations promise eternal life and happiness to all, as the necessary result of the laws of their nature, which, in a future life, will ultimately and inevitably, by their progressive development, bring every one of the human race into the enjoyment of a blissful immortality; whereas the word of God assures us that eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ. So exact a uniformity in sentiments so directly Antichrist can proceed from no mind save that of Satan only. He is preparing the way to make his last effort before he shall be cast out of this world and be shut up in the bottomless pit. Let us not be ignorant of his devices, for, like the spirits under his control, they are legion.*

The binding of Satan does not mean the mere restraining of his influence here on earth for a limited period while he himself shall be present. On the contrary, this enemy of God and of man will be per-

* See also "Spiritualism a Satanic Delusion."

sonally cast out from this earth, and all his power and influence, whatever and however great it may now be, will be cut off. He shall deceive the nations no more for a thousand years.

The place where Satan shall be confined for a thousand years is called in the Greek "the *abyss*" and in our version "the bottomless pit." The Greek word occurs only nine times in the New Testament, and seven of those instances are found in the book of Revelation. It first occurs in Luke viii. 31, where the legion of demons besought our Lord that He would not command them to go out into the deep,—into the *abyss*. They doubtless had reference to that everlasting fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels. (Matt. xxv. 41.) They knew they would ultimately be cast in there, but they besought Him not to torment them before the time had come when Satan too, who has deceived them, shall be punished with them. The word is next found in Rom. x. 7:—"Who shall descend into the deep [*abyss*] that is to bring up Christ again from the dead?" Here the word evidently means only the place of the dead, or where the spirits of the departed go after leaving the body. In Rev. ix. 1, 2, 11, xi. 7, xvii. 8, xx. 1, 3, the word again occurs, and evidently is used as a place of evil or of torment.

It is needless to us to speculate about the locality of this abyss or place of confinement where Satan is to be imprisoned for a thousand years. It is sufficient for us to know that God has a place, somewhere beyond this earth, where this destroyer shall be imprisoned. He will there be perfectly secure. He will not only be in

the abyss, but he will be bound while in it; and, in addition, it will be sealed up. All these expressions convey to our minds the idea of the most perfect security. He may rage there, but all his rage will not reach the inhabitants of this earth, then freed from his oppressive rule and deadly power.

The object of this binding of Satan for a limited period before the final judgment is that God may accomplish His great plans of benevolence and love towards this world before that day. It it predicted that Jesus shall be anointed King upon the holy hill of Zion, (Ps. ii. 6,) and that He shall rule over the house of Jacob forever. (Luke i. 32.) This cannot be done while Satan holds the sceptre of earth as he now does as "prince of this world." He must be cast out, so that the Son of man may reign as King over all the earth. (Zech. xiv. 9.) It is also promised that those "who suffer with Jesus shall also reign with Him," and "that the kingdom and the dominion under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High;" that some shall sit on the right hand of our Lord and some on His left in His kingdom; that some of the saints are to have authority over five cities and some over ten,—all of which cannot possibly be fulfilled while Satan remains unbound. In addition to all this, the binding of Satan for a thousand years will afford time for the gathering in of that great multitude of the redeemed which is to constitute the family of Christ in the future age. It will also give to the now groaning creation a release from all those sufferings which have been brought upon them, not by their own act, but by

that of Adam, who brought them in subjection to vanity, to suffering and death. It may also be the object of our Lord to show to the world what would have been the happy condition of this world, with all its teeming population, if sin had not entered it, and also to give those who may then dwell on the earth some idea of what the future of this world will be when sin and death shall forever be banished from it.

These are some of the glorious events that shall take place in consequence of the binding of Satan. But the future can only reveal to the Church and the world the full glories of earth's blissful release from the oppression of Satan during that happy period.

Whether these thousand years shall be literal years or prophetic years we know not. The probability is that they are prophetic years. If so, then for three hundred and sixty thousand years this earth will be blessed with the peaceful and holy reign of Immanuel, God with us. It will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea, and there shall be nothing to hurt nor to offend.

Is this day of earth's redemption nigh at hand, or is it yet afar off? This is a question which comes home to every child of Adam with peculiar interest. The day when the prince of this world shall be led captive by the Prince of peace will be another bright era in the history of our world. That that day will come, and that it is drawing nigh, there can be no reasonable doubt. The time is fixed, and the dates of the coming preparatory events are all given us, but the time has not yet arrived for us to know the day. Still, we are assured it shall not

come upon the faithful unawares, for the wise shall understand the signs of the times and will be able to prepare for these coming events. By looking at the events which must, according to the prophecies, take place before the binding of Satan, we surely are warranted in the conclusion that the day of the usurper's overthrow is nigh at hand. It is very evident that the following events must take place, and probably in the following order, so far as we get light from the prophecies on this subject.

The first great event in the political affairs of this world which will have a direct bearing upon this looked-for dethronement of Satan will be the freedom of Jerusalem (the holy city, and the holy hill of Zion) from Gentile power. The Turks hold possession of the Holy Land now: the arm of their power must be broken, so that Zion may be free. It is not for us to say precisely how that may be done. But the present condition of the Ottoman Empire, the exhausted state of the treasury, the drying up of the very fountain of their national life,—viz.: the gradual decrease of the population of the country, there being annually more deaths than births in the empire,—the claims of millions of money which some of the Israelites hold against the Ottoman Government, and the present agitated state of the European world,—all seem to speak loudly of the fall of Turkey and the freedom of Palestine. "Zion shall be trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke xxi. 24.

The next event that will mark the fulfilment of the prophecy in reference to the binding of Satan will be the partial restoration of the scattered tribes of the Jews,—viz.: Benjamin and Judah,—and their peaceful

and quiet settlement in their own land in the possession of great wealth.

The next great event will be the murderous attack of the great army of Gog and Magog upon the defenceless inhabitants of the city of Jerusalem, as described by Ezekiel (chap. xxxviii.) and Zechariah, (chap. xiv,) and their final overthrow by the personal coming of our Lord. This event will be followed immediately by the binding of Satan, and his ejectment from this world, and his imprisonment in the bottomless pit for a thousand years.

Other great events will synchronize with these political changes in reference to the Ottoman Empire, and the return of the Jews, and the battle that is to follow. These will be the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom among all the nations of the earth for a witness unto them, the gathering in of the Gentile Church, together with the remnant of Israel, according to the election of grace, and the preparation of the ransomed Church to meet their Lord.

These long-looked-for events are hastening on. Let us watch the signs of the times, and let us be ready, as good and faithful servants waiting for the coming of their Lord. Blessed are they who shall be found waiting for their Lord when He appeareth. Our daily and our fervent prayer should be, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly;" for there is no hope for the redemption of earth and for the stopping of creation's groanings until the Lord come.

CHAPTER XI.

THE GENTILE DISPENSATION.

THE present dispensation of the Church is called "the Christian" or the "Gospel" dispensation, in contradistinction to the Jewish or Mosaic dispensation. The Scriptures designate this period of the Church's history as "the times of the Gentiles." (Luke xxi. 24.) By a dispensation we mean "an order of events appointed by God to continue for a limited time and for the accomplishment of certain ends;" or, in other words, it is God's peculiar mode of providential dealing, for a limited time, with men, as the subjects of His moral government. The term is familiar to Christians, and they understand what is meant by it. We may arrange the dealings of God with men on the earth under three grand dispensations—viz.:

The Dispensation of Paradise, or the Adamic.

The Dispensation of the Curse, or Paradise lost.

The Dispensation of Paradise restored.

The first of these dispensations ended with the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise.

The second still continues, and has been presented to the Church under three distinct aspects. We might call them sub-dispensations, merely for the sake of distinction,—viz.: the Patriarchal, the Mosaic, and now the Christian or Gentile dispensation. The first and second

aspects of this dispensation are past. The third still continues, and is drawing to its close.

The third grand dispensation of earth—viz.: Paradise restored—is yet future. That will commence with the millennial state of the Church, or the dispensation of "the fulness of the times," (Eph. i. 10,) when all things both which are in heaven and which are on earth shall be headed up in Christ. Under this dispensation, continued sin will be forever banished from our world. And after the heavens and the earth shall have been purified, the new earth will be the abode of the ransomed of the Lord, where He will dwell with His saints forever.

We are living at the present time under the gospel or Gentile dispensation. It differs in many of its features both from the patriarchal and from the Mosaic dispensations. In the patriarchal dispensation the father, in every case, was the priest in his own family. Thus, each and every family on earth was designed to be a Church of which the father, or, in case of his death or infirmity, the oldest son, in virtue of his birthright, was to be the minister. The instruction of all the children of the world, and, we might add, their salvation also, depended instrumentally on the instructions of the father. And although times and circumstances have changed since then, yet God has never released man from the obligation to his children that parental duty imposes on him. No father now has the right to transfer to the mother of his children the duty which God has imposed on him to train them up for usefulness and for heaven. The mother may through the affection of her heart perform this duty and thus save her children,

but God will still hold the father accountable for his neglect of duty in the case.

The training up of the youth of the world was in this way committed to the special care of families in their individual capacity. This was a wise and holy arrangement. It was God's mode of bringing the whole human family under the special influence of divine truth. And if that plan had been faithfully pursued, the whole world would have been trained up for God and for heaven. But, so far from that being the case, the great majority of parents gave up the religious training of their children altogether. They were too busy about the affairs of life to take care of their own souls or the souls of their children. The consequence was that the youth of the world, not having the necessary religious instruction, departed farther and farther from God, and gave themselves up to work iniquity with greediness. The world was then soon filled with violence and became corrupt before God, so that it was needful that a flood of wrath should sweep away the sinners from off the earth. Scarcely was the earth dry from its baptism of wrath before men began again to transgress the commandments of God. The flood did not deter them from sin. And, after an experiment of more than two thousand years, God left the world of sinners to pursue their own course in sin. He selected one man—viz.: Abraham—to be the head of a new dispensation. This may be named, after him, the Abrahamic dispensation, or the Mosaic dispensation, after Moses, because to him was given the law, and the completion of those rites and ceremonies which peculiarly characterized that dispensa-

tion, and which began with the rite of circumcision in the family of Abraham.

Under the Mosaic dispensation God committed the religious instruction of the people to the hands of an order of men who were chosen especially for that purpose. This was not designed to supersede the necessity of diligent and faithful parental instruction, but was added to it. It was an advance upon the previous dispensation; men were placed under better circumstances for growing in grace than before. The religious rites under that dispensation were in many things exceedingly burdensome. But they had their meaning and their benefit too. To the posterity of Abraham were committed the oracles of God. The promise of the coming Messiah was renewed. And in Abraham as the progenitor of the Messiah were all the families of the earth to be blessed. God took the posterity of Abraham under his special care; every possible inducement was held out to them to be a holy people. But here again the trial of men failed. The children of Abraham, the father of the faithful, proved to be as rebellious and as stiff-necked as the generations before them had been. And when the Messiah, the son of Abraham, the son of David, did appear on the earth in the fulness of the time appointed, they rejected Him. "He came unto His own possession, [εις τα ιδια,] but His own people [οι ιδιοι] received Him not." (John i. 11.) They rejected the Messiah. In consequence of this wicked act on their part, God has, for the present, rejected them from being the light of the world. They are now, as Hosea expresses it, (chap. i. 9,) Lo-ammi, "not my people."

This, however, is but a temporary rejection of Israel *nationally;* for wrath is come upon them, not to the utmost limit of time nor of degree, but merely *eistelos*, "to the end;" that is, to the end of the times of the Gentiles. (1 Thess. ii. 16.) For Zion shall be trodden down of the Gentiles only until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. (Luke xxi. 24.) The kingdom of God that the Messiah offered then to set up with Israel, and which they rejected, has been taken away from them, and shall be given to a people bringing forth the fruits of righteousness. (Matt. xxi. 43.) The kingdom that has been taken away from Israel for the present is not the gospel dispensation, nor the Church of Christ as at present exhibited in the world; for now both Jew and Gentile may be one in Christ. The Jew finds admission into the Church just as easily as the Gentile, and both on the same terms,—viz.: by faith in Christ. But, in consequence of the rejection of Christ and the kingdom He offered them, God has brought in a new dispensation,—viz.: the Christian or the gospel dispensation, under which the Church now exists.

We come now to inquire, What is the special design of God in introducing this, the Gentile dispensation, into the world, in which the Gentiles have the special honour of having the oracles of the living God committed to their care, and of being honoured above the Jew, in making known its blessed truths to the family of man?

To this question we would answer *negatively:*—

It is not the purpose of God to bring all the world

in subjection to Christ under this dispensation,—that is, during the times of the Gentiles.

The following reasons lead us to this conclusion,—viz.:

The preaching of the gospel for the past eighteen hundred years has not accomplished the work.

The gospel has been faithfully preached by the apostles, and their successors in the ministry, in Asia, in Africa, in Europe, in America, and in many of the islands of the sea; and what has been the result of all their labours, and of the labours of the Church, as we cast our eyes over the wide field that lies all around us? Alas! we still see the whole world lying in the hand of the wicked one, save only the little flock that God by His grace has gathered out from the corrupt mass among whom they dwell as lights in the world. The dark parts of the earth are still full of the habitations of cruelty, and the god of this world still rules in the hearts of the sons and daughters of disobedience. This long delay to bring this world back to God in humble submission to His will is no argument that it will not ultimately be done. But, when this fact is taken in connection with other considerations, it is strong presumptive evidence in the case that something more must be done, or some other plan must be adopted, before the desired work can be accomplished. Multitudes, by the grace of God, have been saved, and multitudes now are sealed by the Holy Spirit and are pressing onward in the way to heaven; but still they are but "a little flock" as yet, when compared with those who know not God and who glorify Him not on the earth. The world is still opposed to God.

From the present spiritual state of the Christian Church, and from the aspect of things in the world, there is no human probability that the world will be savingly converted to God under this dispensation.

The inhabitants of this world are no doubt growing wiser; for multitudes are moving to and fro, and knowledge is increased. The nations of earth will soon be linked together more closely by needles of iron and threads of wire. But science, knowledge, refinement, and the highest degree of improvement in social happiness, family comfort, and rational enjoyment, can never produce any radical change in the heart of man. In days past the world by wisdom knew not God. It became so wise in its own conceit that it actually lost all correct knowledge of the true God. It would do so again if left to itself; for those who have the least reason for their conduct often have the most self-conceit.

But when we look at the Church of Christ, what encouragement have we to believe that the conversion of the whole world will ever be accomplished by her instrumentality under this dispensation? One has said, "Unless the Holy Spirit be poured out and conversions be multiplied, the Church will grow weaker and will exert a still feebler influence. Thousands must be converted where hundreds now are, or there will be no advance upon the kingdom of darkness. Unless the young men of the present generation are converted in large numbers, and their hearts are turned with intense devotion to the work of the ministry, the shadow upon the dial of the world will go backward rather than forward. But for such men in sufficient numbers the Church has

not sought with fastings and with intense agony of spirit." *Am. For. Chr. Union*, 1843, p. 82.

This is desponding language. But it is the language of one who, notwithstanding all these obstacles in the way, still advocates the sentiment that the whole world will be converted to God through the instrumentality of the Christian Church, with the means we now have, or can put into operation, and that, too, under this dispensation.

But, it may be asked, have we not an open Bible? Have we not the means to send it to the ends of the earth? Are not the facilities for worldly intercourse wonderfully increased, and increasing daily? And has not the Saviour promised to be with His Church "until the end of the world,"—the completion of the age? (Matt. xxviii. 20.) Has He not promised to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? And can He not as easily pour out the Holy Spirit upon the churches now as in the days of the apostles and of the Reformers? To all these inquiries, and to as many more of the same character as may be asked, we answer, Yes. Why then may we not expect that He will do so, and that He will pour out His Spirit upon the Church and upon the world and speedily bring the whole into subjection to the will of God? To this we reply,—

The Bible nowhere sanctions the idea that the whole world is to be converted to God under this, the gospel or Gentile, dispensation. But this is the doctrine reiterated from the pulpits of the land every Sabbath, and yet it is practically denied by those who profess to hold it.

We would not throw a straw in the way of any one who earnestly prays and labours for the salvation of his fellow-men, but would most cordially aid him. For all such we earnestly pray that they may bring many to Christ. But discouragement is often the result of efforts misdirected, and of hopes not realized because they are not on a sure foundation.

The promise in Psalm ii. 8, 9 is often quoted to prove that the world is to be converted to God under the present dispensation. But the passage in question proves just the reverse of this. The Psalm represents the Father as addressing the Son, and saying to Him, "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession: thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." So far, then, from converting them, the idea here evidently is that of destroying them. The governments of this world are now opposed to God. The kings and the rulers of earth have set themselves against God and against His Anointed. Their aim is to keep the Messiah from the kingship of earth. But the Lord laughs at their vain imaginings. In opposition to their purposes, He sets Jesus a King upon the hill of Zion. And when He comes to take to himself the government of earth, by casting out Satan the usurper, He will break up all the organized governments of earth, and will dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. The fulfilment of this prediction cannot take place until after the Messiah shall appear as the King of earth upon the holy hill of Zion. When His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives

again, not as formerly when He wept over Jerusalem, but in glory, (Zech. xiv. 4,) then will the promise in this Psalm be fulfilled. But this will not be until after the enthronement of the Messiah on Mount Zion.

The Apostle Paul, in Rom. xi. 30, 31, rejects the idea that the Jews are to be converted to God through the instrumentality of the Christian Church. Indeed, so far as instrumentality is concerned, the Jews, and not the Gentiles, will be honoured of God in the conversion of the world; and yet our translation of the apostle's words makes him utter a sentiment directly the opposite of that which he teaches. His language is plain, and its meaning need not be misunderstood.

"For as ye [Gentiles] in times past have not believed God, yet now have obtained mercy through their [the Jews,] unbelief; even so have these also [the Jews] now not believed *in your mercy*, [*τω υμετερω ελεει, ενα και,*] that they [the Jews] may also obtain mercy; for God hath concluded them [or locked them all up together] in unbelief that He may have mercy upon all."

Here the antithesis is complete. When the Jews in days past experienced a merciful day of grace, the Gentiles remained shut up as nations in idolatry and in sin; but they have now obtained mercy through the fall of the Jews, and will continue to receive mercy from the hand of God during the whole period of the Jewish national unbelief. Even so also now while the Gentile nations are experiencing a season of mercy, the Jews, as such, will not believe on the Messiah in their day of special mercy. It is true that they are beloved of God for their fathers' sakes, but they are enemies to the

gospel for our sakes. But why should they oppose the gospel for our sakes? Why do they not embrace the gospel and with us rejoice together in the hope of the glory of God? The answer is, God is now chastening them for their national unbelief and rejection of the Messiah. The prayer of their rulers, "His blood be on us and on our children," is now receiving its awful answer. God has shut them up in unbelief. And until "He who has the key of David" shall in His sovereign pleasure open their prison-house, and bid those who are "*Lo-ammi*," "not my people," to walk forth in the liberty of the sons of God, they will still remain with the veil of unbelief upon their hearts when they read Moses and the prophets, and will not have the son of David, Jesus of Nazareth, their Messiah, to reign over them. A remnant, and a remnant of Israel alone, according to the election of grace, will be saved under the present dispensation. But the nation as such will not turn to the Lord until they shall *look* upon Him whom their fathers have pierced. Then will they mourn over their sins and turn to the Lord. The national conversion of Israel to the Lord will not be accomplished through the instrumentality of the Gentile Church, but through the personal appearing of the Saviour to them. That the Gentile powers will have an important work to do in aiding Israel to return to the land of their fathers is what the prophets declare. But their restoration to their own land in *an unconverted state*, as it will be, (Ezek. xxxvi. 24–29,) is a very different thing from their conversion to God as predicted by the Prophet Zechariah, (xii. 10.) The Apostle Paul was converted by

the personal appearance of the risen Redeemer to him, and his conversion, it would seem from his own declaration, was, in part, to be a *pattern* or type of the mode in which the nation at the coming of the Messiah shall be converted to Him. In whatever manner or by whatever instrumentality the conversion of Israel may be accomplished, it will not be done through the preaching of the gospel from Gentile lips. That glory is reserved for others, not for us.

In the prophecy of Daniel (chap. vii. 21) we learn that the little horn, the Papacy, is to make war with the saints (עִם־קְדִישִׁין) and to prevail against them until the Ancient of days shall come. When He comes, He will destroy the power of the little horn, and every other opposing power, and shall give the kingdoms of this world into the hands of the saints of the Most High. It is a matter of no consequence now where we place the coming of the Son of man, "the Ancient of Days," —whether immediately before or after the millennium, or at the final judgment. The Papacy will exist until He come. If the coming of the "Ancient of days" be before the millennium, then the Papacy will be destroyed before the millennium, by the brightness of His coming. But that coming of our Lord will introduce a new dispensation, the present one having passed away. But surely the world cannot be considered as converted to God while the Papacy exists to make war against the saints of the Most High. If the coming of the Ancient of days be postponed till the close of the millennium, or to the end of time, then it is most evident that the Papacy must exist until the end of time, and the world,

according to this view, can never be converted to God. Whatever view we may take of this subject, it is evident from this prophecy that the world will not be converted to God under the Gentile dispensation. That work is reserved for another and a future dispensation.

There is another passage of Scripture that we would refer to as a proof that the object of the gospel dispensation is not for the conversion of the world, and that is 1 Thess. ii. 16. Here the apostle tells us that wrath hath come upon them (Israel) to the end (*εις τελος*,) or, as our translation expresses it, "to the uttermost." The idea is not that the displeasure of God rests upon them to the uttermost as to *time* or *degree*, but "to the end." If we inquire what "end" is referred to in this passage, we reply, an answer to it is found in Matt. xxiv. 14, and also in Luke xxi. 24. From these Scriptures we learn that Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles until "the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled." The times of the Gentiles will not be fulfilled until "the dispensation of the fulness of the times" (Eph. i. 10) shall be introduced, and all things shall be gathered together in one (or headed up, *παντα αναχεφαλαιωσασθαι*) in Christ. The conversion of the Jews cannot take place out of Palestine, according to the purpose of God, (Ezek. xxxvi. 17–38;) and while Zion is in the hands of the Gentiles they will not return, nor can they. The gathering of them as a part of "all things which are on earth," and which are to be under Christ as Head, is not to be done under this dispensation, but when our Lord shall return and take to Himself the power and reign. This excludes the idea

of the conversion of Israel, and of course of the world, until the Lord come.

As to the preaching of the gospel, it is designed to be for "a witness unto all nations." And when that witness to the nations shall have been faithfully borne, which surely does not mean their conversion, then will the end of the world, (*συντελεια του αιωνος,*) *the completion of the age* or dispensation, (Matt. xxiv. 3,) take place. If the end of this dispensation will come when the gospel shall have been preached unto all nations for a witness to them, then it is a vain hope to expect the conversion of the world before the end of this dispensation.

These are some of the many reasons which force upon us the belief that this world is not to be converted to God under the Christian dispensation. The conversion of this world to God, if we expound those Scriptures rightly, is not the work that our Lord has given His Church under this dispensation to do. The gospel dispensation is not continued for that purpose.

CHAPTER XII.

THE OBJECT OF THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION.

THE question now comes to us with peculiar force,—What object does God design to accomplish in reference to this world by the introduction of the gospel dispensation?

To this we answer *positively*, in the language of Simeon, "God at the first hath visited the Gentiles, *to take out of them a people for His name.*" (Acts xv. 14.) This is then the specific object that God purposes to accomplish in reference to the Gentile world in this dispensation,—viz.: "to gather out of them a people for His name." If this be all that is purposed, it surely will be all that will be accomplished.

To bring this subject fairly before the mind of the reader, it will be necessary to advert to the circumstances which led to the remark of the apostle.

It appears from Acts xv. 1–2 that a question of great practical importance had arisen among the members of the Church of Antioch. It was concerning the treatment of the Gentile converts. The Apostles Barnabas and Paul could not settle this question to the entire satisfaction of all concerned. It was therefore agreed by the Church that they, in company with others, should go to Jerusalem to consult the apostles and elders there on the subject. They went. After their arrival

"the apostles and elders came together to consider the matter;" and after much mutual discussion and conjunctive inquiry (*πολλης δε σοζητησεως γενομενης*) the Apostle Peter arose and stated the fact that God had through his preaching blessed the Gentiles; that the Holy Spirit had been given to them as well as to the Jewish converts; that God had made no difference between them in the bestowment of His grace; and that, through the grace of our Lord, believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, would be saved, whether they were circumcised or not.

The Apostle Paul, with Barnabas, also declared that God had wrought miracles and wonders among the Gentiles through their instrumentality, while recently preaching the gospel throughout Asia Minor.

The Apostle James then, after a full discussion of the whole subject, and after a patient hearing of what God had done among the Gentiles by the preaching of the gospel, gives his inspired decision in the case:—"Wherefore my sentence is that we trouble not them who from among the Gentiles are turned unto God; but that we write unto them that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from all blood;" that is, from all immoral conduct, and from food that might injure their health of body.

And lest that any of them should think that the Gentiles were *not* to be "fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of the promises of God in Christ Jesus by the gospel," (Eph. iii. 6,) he refers them to the fact that God had now, at the first, visited the Gentiles in mercy to take out of them a people for His name.

The Prophet Amos, (chap. ix. 11, 12,) they knew, had predicted that the Gentiles would be brought into the Church of God. But that ingathering of the Gentiles to which he referred was not to take place till *after* the restoration of Israel, when the tribes should be planted in their own land and be no more pulled up out of their land. The restoration here referred to is one which is not to be followed by any subsequent dispersion of the tribes. Their residence is to be a permanent one:—"I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste *cities* and inhabit them, [not Jerusalem merely, but the waste cities,] and I will plant them upon their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God." Israel is yet plucked up and scattered. Of course this prophecy remains to be fulfilled. Amos ix. 14, 15.

The calling of the Gentiles, therefore, was an event which they, as Jews, had a right, from the predictions of the prophets, to expect. The only difficulty that appeared to be in the case was in regard to the *time* when this should take place. Peter's personal difficulty in the matter had been removed by a special revelation in the first place, and subsequently by the gift of the Holy Spirit upon the Gentiles through his preaching. The Prophet Amos, they all knew, had placed the calling of the Gentiles in the times of the Messiah,—"in that day,"—and after the tabernacle of David that is fallen down should be built up and be as glorious as in former days. But, continues the Apostle James, it is evident now, from the declarations of Peter, of Barnabas, and of Paul, that God in His mercy has anticipated that time,

as to a portion of the Gentiles at least. "God *has* visited them, [επεσκεψατο:] He has looked upon them in mercy *first*,—that is, before the whole Gentile world shall be brought to God,—to take out of them a people for His name." This was something wholly unlooked for by them. But still the order of events as noted in the prophecy is not to be reversed. For "after these things [μετα ταυτα] I will return and build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down, and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things." (Acts xv. 16, 17.) "After these things;" that is, after the Lord shall have gathered to Himself a Gentile Church, He will return and build again the tabernacle of David. The prediction "I will return" is not found in the original prophecy of Amos. It is a new revelation on the subject, and points out to us the special agency by which the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David shall be accomplished,—viz.: by our Lord Himself appearing in His glory. Psalm cii. 16.

"The tabernacle of David that is fallen down" cannot possibly mean the Christian Church, for that has not ceased to exist. But it does mean the house and the kingdom of David, which shall be restored and built up as in days of old, when our Lord shall ascend the throne of his father David and rule over the house of Israel forever. For thus "saith the Lord, I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah." (Jer. xxx. 3.) "I will cause the captivity of Judah, and the captivity of Israel, to return, and I will build them as at

first." (Ezek. xxxix. 25.) "They shall be my people, and I will be their God." "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good." (Jer. xxxii. 38–40; xxxiii. 7.) Then shall they possess, or take into inheritance with them, the remnants of Edom [אֱדוֹם שְׁאֵרִית, Shearith Edom, the house of Esau;] and lastly, all the heathen, all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord." Amos ix. 12.

The order of events as predicted by the prophecy in Amos, and by the new revelation to the apostles in Acts xv., in reference to the conversion of the whole world to God, which doubtless will take place, is most evidently this,—viz.:

1. A gathering out of the Gentile world a people for God's name. (Acts xv. 14.) And incorporated with them will be "the remnant of Israel according to the election of grace," which are now being brought into the fold of Christ. This body will compose the *Christian* or *Gentile Church* under the Christian dispensation. While this Church is in the act of being gathered in, "the times of the Gentiles" will continue, and Jerusalem will remain "trodden down by the Gentiles."

To gather into the Christian Church a people for God's name is the sole object of the Christian dispensation, so far as the conversion of sinners is concerned.

2. "After these things,"—that is, after this Gentile Church shall be gathered out of the nations,—then will the Lord return; the throne of David will be established; the outcasts of Israel and the dispersed of Judah will

be brought back and be settled in their own land, upon the mountains of Israel, as one nation, and no more to be alienated from God, but to be His faithful people forever. Ezek. xxxvii. 22.

3. After the children of Jacob shall have been restored to the favour of God, the remnants of the house of Esau, who shall escape the judgments that will fall upon the nations at the coming of the Messiah, will also be saved. They will embrace the Messiah as the true Prophet of the Lord, and will no more be led astray by the delusions of Mohammed.

4. Next in order follows the saving conversion to God of all the Gentile world, through the instrumentality of ISRAEL converted to God, (Isa. lxvi. 19, 20,) and by special and divine interposition.

As this is the divine arrangement in reference to the conversion of the world, it is perfectly vain for man to attempt to alter it. We cannot reverse it. It is God's plan. There is, then, no hope for the conversion of the world to God until Israel be restored to the favour of God and they acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah. Men may talk largely about what should be done, and about what the Church could do, *if*—yes, *if!* —she would; they may multiply machinery; they may make long and enthusiastic and flattering speeches; they may tell the unthinking multitude what their hopes are; they may denounce all who do not hold to the conversion of all men under the present dispensation: and, after all, it is but breath spent in vain and labour bestowed for naught. All this does not alter the fixed

purpose of God, nor does it tend to accomplish the great work we have to do in the salvation of sinners.

If what we state be the purpose of God, then it is natural to expect that the providence of God will fulfil His purposes in this respect. What, then, has been the history of God's dealings with the Gentile or Christian Church since the ascension of Her Lord, and what is God now doing through the instrumentality of His Church? Is He converting all the world to Himself, or is He only gathering out of this world a people for His name, according to His own purpose in the case, as revealed to us by the Prophet Amos and by the apostles.

What then has God wrought?

If we look at the history of the Church for the past eighteen hundred years, we shall see whether God has done any thing more towards the conversion of the whole world to Himself than what the apostles have authorized us to expect,—viz.: "the gathering out from among the Gentiles a people for His name."

The gospel was first preached in Jerusalem, and then in all Judea. God then gathered out of the land of Israel a people for His name, in which were included both Jews and Gentiles. But, for ages past, Zion has been trodden down by the Gentiles, and the inhabitants of Palestine are not yet converted to God. The light of divine truth is again shining upon the hill of Zion, preparatory to the day when the "glory of the Lord" shall fill the whole land.

From Jerusalem the gospel was carried throughout the whole Roman Empire. Churches from among the Gentiles were gathered to the Lord. And, notwith-

standing the dark night of pagan superstition and of popish ignorance that has rested for so many ages over portions of that empire, still, the gospel is preached there, and God is still gathering out of the Gentiles there a people for His name. The number of the truly godly is comparatively few, for the iron rule of despotism and the blight of popery still rest upon it. Whatever may be the intelligence and the refinement of the people, the gospel never did more, nor is it now doing any more, than gathering out of the masses a people for the glory of the Lord. Where is the ground to hope that it ever will, under this dispensation, do any more?

In Africa, for the first three centuries of the Christian era, there were hundreds of Christian Churches gathered along the shores of the Mediterranean. Through their instrumentality God gathered out of Africa a people for His name. But those Churches have long since been extinct. The gospel sun in ages past sunk down there in a deep night of ignorance, superstition, and gross idolatry. Scarce a star was left to shed its feeble light upon the land of Ham. But, blessed be God, the Sun of righteousness begins again to shine there, and hope tells us that the time is near when, as faith assures us, Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hands to God, and when she too will furnish heirs for the kingdom of God. (Ps. lxviii. 31.) God has blessed the sons of Shem; He has poured out His Spirit upon the sons of Japhet; and we doubt not He has a rich blessing in store for the down-trodden sons of Ham,—for through Christ Jesus all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

In Asia too, for a season, the gospel had free course and was glorified. For a time it bade fair to root out idolatry from Hindoostan. But even there it accomplished only its destined work. After a contest with idolatry for six hundred years, it took out of India a people for God's name. It was then banished, leaving scarcely a vestige of its former excellence behind, and idolatry was again enthroned in the hearts of the people down to the present day. But all of those who are to reign with Jesus from India have not yet been gathered into the Gentile Church. The Lord has yet a people there; and hence the gospel has been sent again to India, and again it is gathering home to God a people for His name.

China, in the seventh century of the Christian era, received the gospel from India by the hands of the Nestorian Christians. Many were there gathered into the fold of Christ, and not a few suffered martyrdom for His name. Again, in the thirteenth century, when Jenghis Khan invaded China, many Christians of the Greek Church followed the army and proclaimed the gospel of Christ to the people. And afterwards, in the reign of Kublai Khan, the gospel made great progress there. But subsequently the Romanists entered the country, and, in consequence of the intrigues of the Jesuits, and their quarrels with the Franciscans and Dominicans, the name of Christ became an offence to the rulers and to the people. The Emperor Chung-shee forbade any one, on pain of death, to preach the gospel of Christ. Thus was Christianity proscribed in that vast empire through the godless ambition of the pretended friends of Christ,

—the Jesuit priesthood. (See Barrow's Travels, p. 296.) But again has the gospel reached China and Japan, where once the name of Christ was so reviled; and now it is completing its work of gathering out of those Gentile lands a people for God's name.

And what is the gospel doing in this highly-favoured land of ours? Where is the hope that it will accomplish more here than it has done elsewhere? It is saving some, not all. It is accomplishing *that* for which God hath sent it forth to do. It cannot do more. "My word shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Isa. lv. 11.

This has been the brief history of the Church of Christ from the day of His ascension until now. The Church is now "as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night." (Jer. xiv. 8.) When its peculiar work is accomplished in one place it passes on to another. The gospel dispensation is not like the leaven hid in the three measures of meal, and which continued its workings until the whole mass was leavened. That state of things represented by the parable will be fully realized in a future dispensation of the Church, but not in this one. Then, when the kingdom of God shall be established on earth, the King Himself being present, it will retain the territories of earth that it shall win. It will continue to increase until all the earth shall become the kingdom of our Lord. For "of the increase of His government and peace *upon the throne of David* there is no end" or termination of it there. The stone cut out of the mountain without hands shall smite all the

kingdoms of this world, and shall itself become a great mountain and fill the whole earth. (Dan. ii. 7.) Then shall the Lord be King over all the earth in that day. The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. Hab. ii. 14; Zech. xiv. 9.

The object, then, of this anticipated visitation of the Gentiles—viz.: "to take out of them a people for God's name"—has so far been accomplished, and nothing more. Why should it accomplish more? But the house of Israel has not been wholly overlooked by this dispensation. A remnant of them, according to the election of grace, has been saved. And the salvation of this remnant is the sure pledge that all the promises which God has made to Israel, both of a temporal and of a spiritual character, shall most certainly be fulfilled. There is a great truth here, which the Gentile or Christian Church would do well to consider. It is the truth that *the Jews in their national capacity are never to be grafted into the Gentile Church; for the Gentile Church is itself only a graft into the ancient stock of the Israelitish Church.* The Jews shall be grafted into their *own* olive-tree. If some of the natural branches of the good olive-tree are broken off, and if we, the wild olives, are grafted in among them, or *instead of them*, (εν αυτοις,) and are now partakers of the root and fatness of the good olive-tree, let us not boast ourselves against the branches that are broken off; for we bear not the root, but the root bears us. And if we, contrary to nature, have been grafted into the good olive-tree, how much more shall these which are the natural branches be grafted into their *own* olive-

tree! We should not be ignorant of this mystery, lest we Gentile Christians be wise in our own conceits, that blindness has happened to only a part of Israel; and that that blindness is to continue only "until the *fulness* [πληρωμα] of the Gentiles," (Rom. xi. 25,) or the full "times of the Gentiles," (Luke xxi. 24,) "be come in." The *fulness* here has reference to "the *times* of the Gentiles," and, it may be, to the full number of "the people gathered out from the Gentiles," but not to the conversion of the whole world. When the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled, then shall there come out of Zion the Deliverer, who shall turn ungodliness away from Jacob; and so all Israel then shall be saved. This is the covenant that God has made with them. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies to it. They will oppose it. This God permits for the sake of the Gentiles, so that His people from among them may be gathered in; for when Israel shall turn to the Lord the Gentile dispensation will come to an end. Rom. xi.

Such, then, are God's purposes towards us Gentiles. All that the Christian Church can do is to do the work assigned her,—viz.: to gather in a people from the Gentile world for the glory of God. But God's plans of mercy towards this world do not cease with the gathering in of a Gentile Church under this dispensation. On the contrary, the apostle expressly tells us that "after these things" the favour of God is to be restored to Israel; the outcasts of Israel and the dispersed of Judah are to be restored to their own land. Then the envy of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not envy

Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. Then shall the offering of Judah and of Jerusalem be present unto the Lord as in the days of old, and as in former years. Isa. xi. 12, 13; Mal. iii. 4.

CHAPTER XIII.

OBJECTIONS TO THE MILLENARIAN VIEW OF THE NATURE AND DESIGN OF THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION BRIEFLY ANSWERED.

MANY good men object to the view of the nature of the Christian dispensation here given, on the ground that *it must necessarily damp the spirit of missions in the Church.* If this objection be well founded, it would militate against the great work of missions, and would be a strong argument against the millenarian doctrine on this subject.

This objection is the only one which has any degree of plausibility in it; and, as it is a common objection, it needs a careful examination and a full and satisfactory answer.

We scarcely know how to state this objection so as to give it force; for in itself it is perfect weakness. We may state it thus:—

If it be the revealed purpose of God that this whole world is not to be converted to God by the preaching of the gospel under this dispensation and through the agency of the Christian Church, then it is useless to

labour for it: and the Church is discouraged, and effectually, too, in her evangelical and missionary efforts for the salvation of the whole world.

In reply, we remark, once for all, that the millenarian fully believes that the time will soon come when all the inhabitants of this world will be holy, and when Satan will be cast out of this earth. "They shall all know the Lord, from the least unto the greatest of them." This universal turning to the Lord will not take place, however, until after Satan shall be cast out of this world, and after the return of our Lord which introduces a new dispensation,—viz.: "the dispensation of the fulness of the times." (Eph. i. 10.) This dispensation will be ushered in speedily and suddenly, and will be preceded by unwonted wickedness in the world and by the judgments of God upon the wicked nations of the earth. This is the millenarian view of the subject. Those who oppose this view maintain that the world will be gradually converted to God through the instrumentality of the Church in her present organization, but that it must necessarily be a long time before it will be done. Both agree fully in the world's conversion. The millenarian looks for it soon, and in the mode and order stated in Chap. XII. p. 140, while others postpone it to a distant period.

It is said that it is discouraging to the evangelical and missionary efforts of the Church for the conversion of sinners if she be told that the whole world will not and cannot be converted by her efforts.

This objection has not a fragment of truth to rest upon. It is altogether lighter than vanity.

Does the fisherman, with the implements of his trade in his hand, refuse to cast his net into the waters because he is told that he never can catch all the fish that are in the sea? He rejoices that there are fish to be caught, and that if he be diligent and be wise in his business he will meet with success. The fact that he cannot catch *all* does not hinder him from trying to catch *some*. And if the Church should be told that she cannot save all, why should that hinder her from trying, in obedience to her Lord's command, to save all she can?

The truth is, the members of the Church of Christ in no period of the history of the Church have ever laboured for the salvation of souls being prompted thereto by the belief that all to whom they preached would be converted to God through their instrumentality. The Apostle Paul tells us that he became all things to all men that by all means he might save *some*. (1 Cor. ix. 22.) He certainly had no expectation of saving all to whom he preached the gospel, nor did he think that his brethren would be more successful in the work than he was. And yet he was not discouraged in his work, nor did his zeal forsake him. If he had no hope of converting all his hearers, what led him to labour so diligently to save some? It was the love of Christ that constrained him to do so. He did it "for the gospel's sake." (1 Cor. ix. 23.) It was the same feeling of love to Christ and to the souls of men that prompted the other apostles, in like manner, to labour to save some. They knew they could not save all; and yet they were not discouraged in their efforts to save all they could.

And if we take any generation of Christians, with

their faithful pastors labouring with them, from the days of the apostles until now,—where and when did they labour to spread abroad the knowledge of Christ among their fellow-men in the full belief that all to whom they preached would embrace the gospel and be saved? There is not one. And yet they did not refuse to labour for the salvation of sinners.

When has a missionary gone forth among the heathen with the expectation that he would be instrumental in saving all those who should hear the words of life from his lips? When has a missionary society ever sent out an ambassador of Christ with the hope that all would receive his message and live? When has a minister of Christ ever entered upon the pastoral duties of his office, in any congregation, in the hope of saving all who should hear him? Do the Churches now labour and toil for the good of others because they believe that they can or will save all? To all these queries we must give one and the same answer:—No, never. They have had no such feelings; and yet they have gone forth to labour for Christ, knowing that the preaching of the gospel would not be in vain,—that thereby some would be saved.

The very commission of our Lord to His apostles and to His Church shows that, when He gave it to them, it was not His expectation that all would be saved through the offer made to them. He says, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." And what encouragement did He give them to believe that the world would be converted through their instrumentality? Was it said to them, "And *all* shall believe and be saved"? Far from it. On the contrary, it is,

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." The apostles went forth, then, at the command of their Lord, upheld by his grace, and cheered by his assurance that *some* would believe and be saved. They were not discouraged nor dampened in their zeal, though they knew that all would not believe.

And is not this commission the same one precisely under which the Church now is acting? Surely it is. And when our Lord had given this commission to His Church He adds, "And lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," rather, unto the end or completion of the dispensation, (*εως της συντελειας του αιωνος.*) (Matt. xxviii. 20.) So it appears, then, that our Lord will be with His ministers unto the end of this age, to sustain them in their work of preaching the gospel to every creature; and yet He makes known to them the solemn fact that all the world will not be converted by their preaching, for, while some will believe and be saved, others will not believe, and will therefore perish.

Where, then, is the hope that this world will be converted to God under this the Christian dispensation? Surely it is not found in the commission of our Lord to His Church:—"He that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned."

But what has been the practical influence of the doctrine that the *coming* of our Lord to establish His kingdom on the earth is the GREAT EVENT for which the Church should labour and pray, and that the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom among all the nations of the earth, for a witness unto them, and for the purpose

of gathering in a people for God's glory, is but a means to obtain the end, and is in fact the SPECIFIC WORK that the Church has to do before she can rejoice in the presence of her Lord as the visible Head of His Church, and as the exalted King over all the earth, that will then bow in willing submission at His feet?

The history of the Church speaks out clearly and distinctly on the subject. Its uniform testimony is that her hope is in the coming of her Lord; and, wherever this hope has taken a full and intelligent possession of the ministers and the members of the Church, there has been manifested an untiring zeal in the cause of Christ and unremitted labour for the salvation of sinners.

Take the apostles, for example. They certainly believed in the return of their Lord, as the great hope of the Church. The last inspired words of the Apostle John which are left on record are "Come, Lord Jesus; come quickly." And surely no one will say that this hope crippled their exertions in doing good, or hindered them from publishing the gospel as far as their strength and lives enabled them to do it. Indeed, the publishing of the gospel "to the uttermost parts of the earth" (Acts i. 8) was the work essentially necessary to be done before the Lord would return, and before the kingdoms of this world should become the kingdom of our Lord. The hope of the coming of the Lord was the inspiring motive to labour as they did; for until He come Satan will hold his usurped possession of earth. They understood well the nature of their divine commission, and faithfully did they fulfil it. It was not, "Go forth and convert all the world," but it was, (and the same is to

the Church now,) "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

From the days of the apostles down to the time of the Reformation we have a long list of faithful men who looked upon the coming of their Lord as the only hope of the world's salvation; and yet they were not slothful in the work of the ministry, nor were they hindered by their faith in their Lord's coming from preaching the word faithfully and in making efforts to save sinners. Did such men as Barnabas, the companion of St. Paul, Clement, (A.D. 96,) Ignatius, (A.D. 100,) Polycarp, the disciple of John, (A.D. 108,) Papias, (A.D. 116,) Justin Martyr, (A.D. 150,) Irenæus, (A.D. 178,) Hippolitus, (a disciple of Irenæus, A.D. 220,) Tertullian, (A.D. 200,) Cyprian, (A.D. 239,) Nepos, (A.D. 250,) Methodius, (A.D. 260,) Victorinus, (A.D. 280,) Lactantius, (A.D. 300,) the Council of Nice, (A.D. 325,)—did these men, and a host of others that might be named, find their missionary spirit die out or grow feeble because they hoped that soon their work would be accomplished and the Lord would speedily appear for the salvation of His Church and the redemption of this world from the hand of Satan? Their devoted lives and martyr spirits show what influence this holy hope had on them. The Waldensian Church from A.D. 314 to the present is millenarian in its faith. Wickliff (A.D. 1350) held the premillennial advent of Christ. Foxe, Bale, Osiander, Leo Juda, Latimer, Ridley, Ecolampadius, Melancthon and Luther, Tyndale, Bradford, Piscator, Bullinger, Knox, Calvin, and others, held the same doctrine. Joseph Mede, of England, born A.D. 1586,—one of the most pious and profoundly learned men of his.

days,—was a millenarian. Twisse and Archbishop Usher were his pupils. A majority of the Westminster divines were thorough millenarians, and no one will charge them with want of zeal for the salvation of the men of their own generation and of the generations to come. Among these we find the names of Twisse, Marshall, Palmer, Ash, W. Bridge, Jeremiah Burroughs, J. Carlyl, T. Goodwin, W. Gouge, J. Langley, Peter Sterry. The Confession of Faith nowhere teaches the doctrine of a thousand years, a millennium, before the coming of Christ.

At the present time the most active and useful ministers and Christians in the various evangelical Churches in England, Ireland, and Scotland are found among those who have no confidence in the doctrine of the world's conversion before the coming of our Lord. We might name such men as Elliott, Cox, Sirr, Hooper, Noel, Bagg, Woodward, McNeale, Fysh, Melville, Wolffe, Brooks, Burg, Bonar, Anderson, Candlish, Cunninghame, Cumming. A volume might be filled with the names of the ministers of Christ in Great Britain alone who hold to the premillennial advent of our Lord.*

And among the evangelical ministers of this country more than six hundred of the most useful and laborious men are found among the advocates of the premillennial coming of our Lord. These men are the warm and devoted friends of missions and of revivals, and are labouring faithfully in their respective spheres of labour for the salvation of sinners, though they have no confidence in the platform-speeches of the day, that the

* For a more complete list of names, see "Voice of the Church."

world is soon or ever to be converted to God before the coming of our Lord. We mention no names, lest it might be thought that we are partial in our judgment where there are so many who are so faithful to God in the work of the ministry.

As to the missionaries now on heathen ground, many of them, though not all, are decidedly millenarian in their sentiments. And although they do not believe that this world will ever be converted to God until the Lord come, yet are they, like the great Apostle to the Gentiles, faithfully labouring to save *some*. The devoted and the beloved Poor, whose body sleeps in Jesus on heathen ground, spent his life in labouring to bring sinners to Christ; and yet his only hope of the conversion of this world to God was in the glorious personal coming of our Lord.

The abuse of a truth is no argument against the truth itself. There no doubt have been, and yet are, believers in the personal and speedy return of our Lord to this world to establish that kingdom that shall stand forever, who do not manifest that zeal for the salvation of the living around them that they should. But in this respect they are like multitudes of others, who profess to believe that the world is to be converted to God through the instrumentality of the Church under the present dispensation, and yet they do little or nothing to forward the work. It would be a most calamitous thing to make the truth or the falsity of any doctrine depend upon the zeal or the apathy of those who profess to hold it. And yet we may safely appeal to the whole history of the Christian Church

from the day of our Lord's ascension until now, and ask, Where has there been found a more faithful, a more laborious, a more self-sacrificing, a more thoroughly evangelical, a more prayerful, a more soul-loving class of ministers and Christians than have been or yet are known as believers in the personal premillennial coming of our Lord before the conversion of the world to God? We know not where they can be found.

A millenarian who is consistent in his views on this great subject is zealous for the salvation of sinners and for the spread of the gospel to the ends of the earth, not in spite of the doctrine of our Lord's premillennial advent which he holds, but in accordance with it and because he does believe it. The idea is this. Satan must be bound and be cast into the bottomless pit before the millennial dispensation of the Church shall dawn upon the world. Satan cannot be cast out until our Lord return and bind this strong man armed, who now is "the prince of this world." Our Lord will not return until this gospel of the kingdom shall first be preached among all nations for a witness unto them, and until He shall have gathered out of the Gentiles a people for His name,—not until this world is converted, but until a people is gathered out of it for the glory of God. Now, the specific work of the Church is to gather out of the Gentile world this chosen people. When that shall be done, then will the Lord come, for the bride will be ready for the Bridegroom; then shall Satan be cast out from this world, and then will the millennial reign of Christ begin, and the world will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord.

Now, we ask, which view of the subject is most likely to inspire the Christian with zeal for the salvation of souls,—the millenarian view, which advocates the speedy spreading of the gospel among all nations for a witness to them, and the gathering in of a chosen Church, to be followed by the speedy return of our Lord to reign over earth in glory forever,—or the anti-millenarian view, which holds to the slow and tedious process of converting the whole world before the millennium shall be ushered in, and which is to continue for a thousand years more before our Lord shall return and bless the earth with His presence and cast out Satan, "the prince of this world," from his usurped possessions here. For ourself, we hesitate not to say that the millenarian view of the subject is infinitely more encouraging and cheering than the opposite view, because it is more scriptural. The reader can judge for himself.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE WORK OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

In any enterprise in which men may be engaged, it is of great importance to form a clear and distinct idea of the work that is to be done. This will enable them to give a proper direction to their efforts. It will also encourage them in their work when they know that the object they have in view will ultimately be reached, and that their efforts are of the right kind and also are

properly directed. This is especially true in reference to the work that the Great Head of the Church has given His Church to do. The Patriarchal Church, or, rather, the Church under the patriarchal dispensation, had its peculiar work to do. So had the Church under the Mosaic dispensation her work; and now the Church under the Christian or Gentile dispensation has her work to do. What, then, is the specific work of the Church of Christ under this dispensation? The answer to this question is contained in the words of our Lord to His disciples before His ascension, as recorded by them.

The work of the Church is this:—

"Go ye, therefore, and teach [*μαθητευσατε*, disciple] all the nations, baptizing them in [*εις*, into] the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world, [unto the completion of the age, *εως της συντελειας του αιωνος.*]" Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

"Go ye into all the world [*εις τον κοσμον απαντα*] and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned [*καταχριθησεται.*]" Mark xvi. 15, 16.

"And he said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things." Luke xxiv. 46–48.

Here is the commission of the Church in its fullest extent, and here is the work she has to do:—

1. She is first to go into all the world, into every part of it, and preach the gospel to every creature.

2. She is to teach or make disciples of all the nations: that is, to bring them under the teachings of the gospel.

3. She is to baptize all the nations in the name of the Triune God.

This is the specific work of the Christian Church. And, for her encouragement, it is promised that some will believe the message of mercy that may be brought to them, and thus will be savingly converted to God, while at the same time she shall have the special presence and assistance of the Holy Spirit, the gift of her ascended Lord, to the end of the age, when her work will be done.

To enable us to get a more clear and distinct view of the nature of the work to be done, it will not be amiss here to look more closely at the language of this commission.

The command is, "Go ye into all the world," (κοσμος,) and the promise is, "I am with you alway, even until the end of the world," (αιων.)

The words κοσμος (*kosmos*) and αιων, (*aion*,) both rendered by the word *world*, have a different meaning, and are designed to convey to our minds a difference of idea. The word κοσμος (*kosmos*,) means *the collective body of mankind dwelling at any period of time on the earth.* The word αιων (*aion*) means *a particular era*, or *a certain period of time.* Thus we see that *kosmos* refers to the *people* who may be living on the earth, while *aion* refers to the *time*, the particular era in which they may live.

The work to be done is to preach the gospel to every creature,—to teach and to baptize the nations. The result will be that some will believe and will be saved.

It is plainly, then, the duty of the Christian Church to preach the gospel, or cause it to be preached, to every creature on the earth. This, by the blessing of God, she can do. But the conversion of the souls of the people to God is not in the power of man to perform. That is the work of the Lord. The duty of preaching is ours, the result is with the Lord. And whenever this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, (ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ οἰκουμενῃ,) in all the habitable parts of the world "for a witness unto all the nations, then shall the end come." (Matt. xxiv. 14.) The end referred to here cannot possibly mean the end of the *kosmos*,—that is, the end of the existence of human beings upon the earth,—but the end of the *aion*, the end of the *age* or *dispensation* during which the Church is to be engaged in preaching the gospel to all the nations.

It might at first sight seem to be the design of our Lord that the teaching and the baptizing of all the nations, and the preaching of the gospel to every creature, should convey to our minds the idea of the conversion of all these nations. But a careful examination of the language of our Lord in His commission to the Church will convince us that this is not the case. And this is fully confirmed by the declaration of the apostle in Acts xv. 13–17, where we are told that the result of the preaching of the gospel will be only to gather out of the Gentiles a people for God's name. Subsequent to this will be the return of our Lord, the conversion of

the whole house of Israel, and then follows the saving conversion to God of the whole world. Amos ix.

Our work, then, as a Christian Church, is to preach the gospel to every creature in all the habitable world. The mere circulation of the Sacred Scriptures in every language under heaven will not meet the spirit or the letter of this commission. The ambassadors of Christ must GO into all the world, and they must PREACH the gospel of the kingdom to all the nations of the earth, and to every individual of those nations who can hear and understand the message of mercy. The commission does not require that the gospel should be preached at the same time among all the nations of the earth. Nations, ages ago, may have had the gospel and may have rejected it. It is not needful, then, to fulfil this commission, that these nations should have it again. Still, as we know not what may be God's secret purpose in the case, our duty is to continue our work until the work be done in accordance with the purpose of God.

The question of practical importance that now arises is this:—Is the Church of Christ pursuing now that course which, if continued, would really accomplish the work she has to do? To this question we dare not say, Yes, for we do not believe it.

Keep in mind the fact that our Lord has commissioned His Church to preach the gospel among all the nations of the earth. Now, in the United States of America we have a population of twenty-five millions of people, and about twenty-five thousand ministers of the gospel of all the various evangelical denominations. That will give

one minister to every thousand of the people. These numbers are near enough to the actual number of both the people and the ministers to answer every practical purpose. We will suppose that all the Protestant population of Europe is equally well supplied with the preaching of the gospel by the living minister. From statistics carefully prepared, it appears that there are five thousand and forty Protestant missionaries, including assistants and native helpers. Now, in the whole world this would give about one missionary, assistant or helper, to every two hundred and sixty thousand of the population of the heathen world. This evidently shows that some parts of the field have more than their needful supply, while others are still enveloped in gross moral darkness.

The spiritual Church of Christ on earth is one. For there can be but one body and one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. (Eph. iv. 4–6.) Still, this one Church is now broken up into fragments and scattered throughout the world. Family names separate them now, so that to the world they appear as many and opposing, and not as one and agreeing. Although there is no radical difference in the faith of this spiritual Church of Christ, yet the members of it have so multiplied forms and ceremonies that virtually they have become many, and by so doing hinder themselves in the work their Lord has given them to do. Leaving the essentials of faith in which they are *one*, each family of this household of one common faith has lifted up a standard for itself, around which none are permitted to rally unless in all things

they can pronounce, without stammering, the *shibboleth* of the household. Hence one has said, We all have been immersed once in baptism; and those who would labour with us must enter this household by the same door. Others reply, But we have been immersed *thrice;* and ye and others cannot come with us unless ye have *thrice* been immersed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Another says, We believe that all ecclesiastical power in the Church is in the hands of the ministry, and for union and unity we would have all who come with us to believe so too. But others reply, We accord to each member of our family a voice in the management of our affairs: come with us and you may have the same; but we cannot go with you. Another says, We love to praise God in the great congregation in the words of the inspired Psalmist alone, or as nearly as we can get them: come with us; for we cannot go with you. Others reply, We too can sing the praises of our God in the language of David, or Moses, or Asaph, or Isaiah, or any of the prophets; yea, more, we can turn the language of our Lord, of His apostles, and of His martyred saints or of His living ones, into songs of thanksgiving and praise, and with grateful hearts praise our God therewith: come with us and enjoy with us a wider liberty for praise. One says, The blood of Christ was shed alone for those who shall ultimately be saved: those who would dwell in our fold must enter by this narrow door. Others say, We too have an advocate with the Father,—Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the Propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, *but for the whole world.* (1 John

ii. 2.) Some say, No one can break unto us the bread of life, or is authorized to preach the gospel of the Son of God, if he follow not with us in our line of succession in the ministry. Others reply, We point you to the thousands of converts to God from the ranks of our adversary and God's, and say, See, these are the seals of our ministry, and the witnesses that God has given us that we are doing the work He has given us to do. Thus is this really united family of Christ hindering themselves in the work they have undertaken to do.

Some would make us believe that it is better for the Church that sectarianism should exist, and that rivalship in the Church increases the zeal and the benevolence and liberality of the Church. It is true that many will do for the Church through a sectarian feeling what they would not do for it through a simple love for Christ. But if it be better that the Church should thus be divided, why should our Lord pray that the whole family of Christ may be *one* and "made perfect in *one*"? (John xvii. 11, 23.) In the millennial dispensation there will be but one flock. Then all denominational and sectarian differences will be gone. And why is this? Because then all will be righteous, the Church will be more holy, and the great Head of the Church Himself will then be present, and Satan, the great schismatic, to whose agency can be traced all the dissensions in the Church and in the world, will be banished from our earth.

But, looking now upon the whole household of faith as one family, and all of them aiming to carry forward the work of the Lord, to spread the knowledge of Christ and of His salvation to the ends of the earth, the ques-

tion still occurs, Is the Church really doing the work of the Lord in the best way? As the field to be cultivated is *the world*, and as this gospel of the kingdom must be preached to every creature before the Lord come and Satan be cast out from the usurped kingship of this world, is the plan the Church is now pursuing the best one to accomplish this great, this longed-for, event? Is it the best plan to have one minister in this land to every thousand of the people, while the other part of the field—the heathen portion—has but one to every two hundred and sixty thousand of her benighted population? Is it best to have a few who are wealthy, crowded together in chapels-of-ease, whose thousands are expended on themselves to gratify their taste, and who do but little for the salvation of sinners at home or abroad, save the small contributions they may occasionally spare when called on to bestow them? Is it best to have some portions of the Church groaning under the oppressive load of the unappropriated mass of their Lord's money, while others are labouring in great discouragement for lack of that aid which they might so easily render, and which intelligent love to Christ and His cause would prompt them to give? Is it best for a minister of Christ to spend his life in preaching to some twenty or thirty families and their children, because they do not choose to hear the words of life with those who merely differ from them in the tune or the hymn they may use in praising God, or in the position they may take in the act of prayer, or because their brethren may think that Jesus died for one or many poor sinners more than they do? Is it best for a minister of Christ "to preach the gospel as a witness" to the peo-

ple who have heard the same for many a year and but few of whom embrace it, while he might testify of the love of Christ to multitudes of his brethren according to the flesh who have never yet heard that there is a Saviour for them? Is it best to separate a noble army of men from the direct work of the ministry to gather up the collections for the saints and for the spread of the gospel at home and abroad, while an inspired apostle exhorts that "upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him, that there be no gathering when I come, and when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality [χαριν, favour] to Jerusalem," or to those for whom it was intended? (1 Cor. xvi. 2, 3.) Could not hundreds of faithful ministers of Christ be sent at once into the wide field where their witnessing for Christ would hasten the work the Church has to do, while the people of God in this enlightened land, and who have believed the testimony of the Lord, could combine their efforts for the good of others and would thereby grow more rapidly in grace? Is it the best plan, in bringing the *whole farm* under culture, to devote so much time and labour upon one acre of it, while the hundreds are left to be overrun with briers and thorns and so little is done to subdue it also? And can the Church of Christ be doing the work assigned her by her lavish expenditure of time and talents and means upon so small a spot of the whole field, that some of the labourers who ought to be at work are standing idle gazing at others who are working, and finding fault with them for their mode of work-

ing for their Master? Has not the Lord of the harvest called on them to go and work in His vineyard? And do they still say, No *man* has hired us? But do they not hear their Lord say again to them, "Go ye into my vineyard, and *I will pay thee* that which is right"? Oh, it is sad to think that there are so many who are called by the name of Christ who are not ecclesiastically commissioned to preach the gospel, and so many who are thus commissioned, who see the desolation sin has made, who know that the fields are white unto the harvest, (John iv. 35,) and yet labour not to gather in the precious grain into the granary of the Lord. The field is the world: but what are they doing to cast in the good seed of the kingdom of God? The work is to be done. It must be done before the Lord come. If the Church, in her love of ease, refuse to send out to the uttermost parts of the earth the light of divine truth, (as she is able to do,) she may ere long be compelled by the hand of persecution to do what her love for Christ and for perishing sinners should prompt her willingly to do. In days past "there was a great persecution against the Church at Jerusalem, and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles." And what was the blessed result of that persecution, both upon the members of the Church and upon the people among whom they were dispersed? The answer is, "They that were scattered abroad went everywhere, preaching the word. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spoke,

hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed; and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city." (Acts viii. 1–8.) We say again, what has been may be. The Lord will hasten this work in His time, (Isa. lx. 22,) and persecution may do more in one year to send the gospel of Christ to the ends of the earth than all the preaching of the ministers of Christ could constrain the Church to do in ten. For is it not now in the Christian Church as in Israel in the days of the prophet,—"Like people, like priest"? Hos. iv. 9.

And as to the saving of sinners from the wrath to come, there is but one way, and that is to "preach Christ unto them." Such preaching, though it may stir up the enmity of many a heart, yet it will produce "great joy in that city," wherever and by whomsoever it may be received. Iniquity will abound, and the love of many will grow cold; the wise and the foolish virgins will sleep together; "evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse;" and no denunciations of wrath will deter men from sin or destroy the growing infidelity of the age. More than human power is needed to bring the prodigal heart back to God. Nor is it every kind of truth that can sanctify the heart thus brought to God. It must be the truth that God has revealed to man. Hence the prayer of our Lord, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." (John xvi. 17.) One ray of divine light will do more to dispel the moral darkness of the mind than all the philosophy of an age. And although the Church of God, by the preaching of Christ and of

Him crucified, cannot banish infidelity and sin from our world, yet in no other way can they be instrumental in saving souls, which is the great work of the Church. Let Christ be preached, and God's Church in this dispensation will be gathered out of the Gentiles, and the gospel will be the wisdom of God and the power of God to the saving of those who believe.

CHAPTER XV.

ISRAEL RESTORED.

It is evident, from the Scriptures, that Israel will be restored to their own land. This will be done when our Gentile times shall cease; for "Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled." (Luke xxi. 24.) The land belongs to them by right of gift from God. The first grant of the land was given to Abraham. It is in the following language:—"And the Lord appeared unto Abram and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land; and there he built an altar unto the Lord who appeared unto him." (Gen. xii. 7.) This was spoken to Abraham on his arrival from Ur of the Chaldees in the land of Canaan. Shortly after this, Abraham went down to Egypt, there being a famine in the land of Canaan at that time. On his return from Egypt, and after Lot had departed from him, the Lord again appeared to him and said, "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward and southward, and eastward and westward;

for all the land which thou seest to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever." (Gen. xiii. 14, 15.) This was shortly after the call of Abraham,—probably B.C. 1918. And when God changed the name of Abram, which means *an exalted father*, to that of Abraham, which means *the father of a great multitude*, and which was done by adding the letter *h*,—one of the letters of the name Jehovah,—the promise was again renewed:—"I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger,—all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." (Gen. xvii. 8.) The covenant of circumcision ratified this grant of the land on the part of God to Abraham:—"My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant." (Gen. xvii. 13.) This promise was renewed to Isaac and Jacob, and to their posterity after them. (Gen. xxviii. 13, 14, xxxv. 12.) And in Leviticus xxv. 23 we find another special promise from God that the land shall not be taken from them forever:—"The land shall not be sold forever; for the land is MINE, and ye are strangers and sojourners with me." From these passages of Scripture, and from others, as 2 Chron. vii. 20 and Ps. ii. 6, it appears that, while God is the owner of all this world, (Ps. xxiv. 1,) yet He has a special regard for one portion of it,—viz.: the land of Canaan. He holds it *in trust* for Israel. It was there that our Lord became incarnate; there He was crucified; and it is there that He will be worshipped as King over all the earth by a penitent and believing world.

The Gentiles have taken this land out of the hands of Israel. They still tread down the holy hill of Zion.

Israel, "the people of thy holiness, have possessed it but a *little while;* our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary," (Isa. lxiii. 18,) is the mournful language of the prophet. But the day draws nigh when "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts [that is, her returning children] with righteousness." Isa. i. 27.

Judgments and miracles will attend their restoration.

That God will in a most signal manner interpose in behalf of Israel and bring them back to Zion is what the prophets constantly affirm. "The Lord shall set His hand again the *second* time to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And He shall set up an *ensign* for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the *four corners* of the earth." (Isa. xi. 11, 12.) The object of this gathering is to bring them into their own land. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, The Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but the Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither He had driven them; and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers." (Jer. xvi. 14, 15.) This gathering is yet to take place: "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment," "and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off." (Isa. i. 27; xi. 13.) This restoration will be accomplished,

not for any merit of Israel, but simply to manifest God's goodness to them and to show His fidelity to His own promises. "Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you, O house of Israel; but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen whither ye went." Ezek. xxxvi. 22–32.

That there will be miracles wrought in their behalf is also manifest. The Nile and the Euphrates are both to be smitten by the power of God as truly as was the Red Sea; and the Israelites shall pass over them, walking on the dried beds of these rivers. "The Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea, and with His mighty wind shall He shake His hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod." (Isa. xi. 15.) No bridging of the river, no railroad or steamboat conveyance, can possibly be the fulfilment of this prophecy. There will be as miraculous an interposition of God again in behalf of the returning Israelites as there was when they came up out of the land of Egypt. That they will be assisted by the improvements of the day there can be no doubt; for "they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines towards the west." (Isa. xi. 14.) A rather unhappy translation this: rather, "they shall go swiftly on the coasts of Philistia," which is the true rendering of the Hebrew words וְעָפוּ בְכָתֵף פְּלִשְׁתִּים. This, we doubt not, has a reference to the steamboats which now ply along the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea, and to the railroads that ere long will be laid throughout the

Eastern world. But more than human power is brought to view here. Not only will there be this drying up of the rivers or the restraining their waters for an appointed time, but there will also be a highway prepared for their accommodation. "There shall be a highway for the remnant of His people which shall be left from Assyria." (Isa. xi. 16.) Not only so, but God will provide for their comfortable passage by the way. So that those who may go will find not only water to slake their thirst, trees to refresh them with their shade, and food for their support, but they will also find that all cause of danger and alarm will be removed. No lion nor savage beast of prey shall molest them. The redeemed of the Lord shall walk there. They shall return to Zion with songs and rejoicings. Such language as the following cannot well be deprived of its literal meaning:—"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. . . . In the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. . . . The parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water." (Isa. xxxv. 1–10.) "I will open rivers in the high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. . . . I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah-tree, and the myrtle and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir-tree, and the pine and the box together; that they may see and know and consider and understand together that the *hand of the Lord* hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath *created* it." (Isa. xli. 18–20.) "The Lord shall comfort Zion; He will

comfort all her waste places; and He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord: joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody." Isa. li. 3.

And when they shall be returned and settled in their own land they will not be molested nor injured by wild beasts. God will restrain their ferocity, or so change their natures that they will be peaceful and quiet:—"Thus saith the Lord God unto them: I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land; and they shall *dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods.*" (Ezek. xxxv. 25–28; Hos. ii. 18.) So secure will the Israelites be from the fear of man or of animals that they will dwell in unwalled villages, having no walls of defence around them, and no gates or bars to any of their dwellings. Ezek. xxxviii. 11.

Isaiah expressly declares that "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb and the leopard with the kid: they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain saith the Lord." If we ask them when this shall be, the answer is, "*when* the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. xi. 6–9.) The Hebrew word כִּי, (*ki*,) rendered by the word "*for*" in the ninth verse, is rendered *when* in Hos. xi. 1,—(*ki naar Israel*,) "*when* Israel was a child." It should, we judge, be rendered so in this verse. So radical will be the change in the animals, and especially in those which are now ferocious, that the lion will eat straw like the ox. (Isa. xi. 7, lxv. 25.) Let no one suppose that this cannot or will not be. If the animals, as is evident from

Gen. i. 30, at first lived on the green herb, their present ferocity and their present mode of living on flesh is a departure from their original state. For the lions to eat straw like the ox in the days of millennial blessedness will be only a return to their primitive diet. It surely cannot be an impossible thing. If God could support a king for seven years on grass, and change his hair so that it appeared like eagles feathers' and his nails became like birds' claws, and then restore him to his former likeness, and if He fed the lions at first on grass, He surely can do it again. The only question for us to ask is, Will God do it? All we can reply is, He says He will: we believe it.

The whole animal world, that has been brought under the curse for man's sake, will then be delivered from the bondage of corruption under which it now groans. Not only do Isaiah and Hosea speak of this change in the condition of the animal world, but the Apostle Paul also assures us that the creature, the groaning creation, shall be delivered from the present bondage of corruption, and shall be made a partaker of happiness and of peace according to their natures, at the same time that the children of God shall be blessed under the peaceful sway of the Prince of peace. Rom. viii. 19–23.

The Israelites will be greatly increased on their return to Canaan.

At the present time they do not number more than eight or ten millions, so far as their number has been ascertained. But when they shall be settled in quiet and in peace in their own land, God will greatly multiply them:—"I will multiply them, and they shall not be few.

I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small. Their children shall also be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established before me." (Isa. xxx. 19, 20.) "I will increase them as I have increased them." (Zech. x. 8.) "Yea, the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered." (Hos. i. 10; Jer. xxxiii. 22.) "I will increase them with men like a flock. The waste cities shall be filled with flocks of men." (Ezek. xxxvi. 38, 38.) Not only will there be an increase of people, but there will also be an increase of cattle, and of provisions, and of every thing that can add to their comfort. "I will multiply upon you man and beast, and they shall increase and bring forth fruit; and I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better unto you than at your beginning; and ye shall know that I am the Lord. . . . And I will call forth the corn, and increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree and the increase of the field." Ezek. xxxvi. 11, 29, 30.

Life will be prolonged.

During the millennium the lives of the people will be greatly lengthened. They will probably equal the lives of the antediluvians. The happy and peaceful lives that the inhabitants of the world will then lead, and their freedom from the follies and the vices that now tend to shorten life, will greatly conduce to promote the longevity of the people. But the direct agency of God will be that which will extend the lives of the people to hundreds of years instead of being as now limited to threescore years and ten. "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, or short-lived; nor an old

man that hath not filled his days; for he that dieth at an hundred years shall die a boy. . . . As the days of a tree are the days of my people. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for [or through] trouble:" they shall not generate a short-lived race. (Isa. lxv. 17–23. See Lowth's translation.) "The inhabitants shall no more say, I am sick." Isa. xxxiii. 24.

The bounds of the inheritance of Israel will be greatly enlarged after the return of the twelve tribes.

The ancient boundaries of the land of Canaan did not much exceed one hundred and eighty miles long by one hundred miles wide. But the country to be possessed by the restored tribes will be double the former in extent. The prophecy of Isaiah lxi. 7, according to the translation of Bishop Lowth, is exceedingly plain on this point:—"Instead of your shame ye shall have a double inheritance, and of your ignominy ye shall rejoice in their portion; for in their land a *double share* shall ye inherit, and everlasting gladness shall ye possess."

It does not appear that David or Solomon ever possessed all the land that God had given Israel, though for a while the nations possessing the country were tributary to Solomon. Their southern boundary extended only to Kadesh-barnea, though the original grant gave them from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea, and from the Arabian desert unto the river Euphrates. (Ex. xxiii. 31.) So that it was strictly true in the time of Solomon, as well as in the days of Joshua, (xiii. 1,) "there remained yet very much land to be possessed."

When the Israelites shall return and settle in the land, they will possess it from Hamath in Syria, on the

north, to Meribah-Kadesh, near the Red Sea, on the south. The language of the prophet is, (see the Hebrew of Ezek. xlvii. 19) "The side of the south southward, from Tamar to the waters of Meribah-Kadesh to the great sea, is the *inheritance* [נַחֲלָה] the south side southward." The word *nahalah*—rendered "river" in our translation of this verse—should have been rendered *inheritance*, as it is in verses 22 and 23. The whole land will then extend from Tamar (or Tadmor or Palmyra, in the desert of Syria) to Meribah-Kadesh, near Mount Sinai, in the south. And this, by actual measurement, will be *double* the extent of country occupied formerly by the tribes from Dan to Beersheba.

THE DIVISION OF THE LAND.

From Ezekiel we learn that the tribes after their restoration will be differently settled from what they were in the days of Joshua. There we find that nine and a half tribes were on the west side of the Jordan and two and a half were on the east side. They were in the following order:—Asher, Naphthali, Zebulon, Issachar, Manasseh, (half-tribe,) Ephraim, Dan, Benjamin, Judah, Simeon, on the west; and Manasseh, (half-tribe,) Gad, and Reuben on the east side of the Jordan. But after their return the land will be divided into *thirteen* portions of equal width of about forty-two and a half miles. Between Benjamin and Judah there will be the holy oblation, forty-two and a half miles square, with the priests' portion extending on either side to the Mediterranean and the river Euphrates. These several portions, lying in parallel divisions, will extend from the Mediterranean

Sea and the river Nile, on the west, to the river Euphrates and the Persian Gulf on the east. They will lie in the following order,—viz.:

Dan,
Asher,
Naphthali,
Manasseh,
Ephraim,
Reuben,
Judah.

The holy oblation, 25,000 reeds square.

Benjamin,
Simeon,
Issachar,
Zebulon,
Gad.

According to this division, Dan, Asher, Naphthali, and Manasseh will have their portion in ancient Syria; Ephraim, Reuben, Judah, and Benjamin will have their portion in the old land of Canaan; and Simeon, Issachar, Zebulon, and Gad will have their inheritance in the wilderness that lies between Mount Sinai and the ancient Canaan.

The land will become fertile.

It would be impossible now for any persons to settle down in the wilderness south of the ancient Canaan and support themselves by agriculture, because the whole is a barren desert of sand and unfit for cultivation. But it is an easy thing for God to restore that land to fertility. And when He promises to do so we know it will be

done. The earth at first brought forth abundantly for man and beast. Its barrenness is the sad effect of the curse that now rests upon it. Thorns and thistles, which now spring up in luxurious abundance everywhere, are the standing emblems of the curse upon the earth, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake," (Gen. iii. 17,) is the declaration of God to Adam. And when God shall bring back His ancient covenant people He will not only bless them with the graces of His Spirit, but He will bless the ground also for their sakes. And "instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." (Isa. lv. 13.) That is, these trees will be an everlasting sign that the curse has been removed from the earth, and that its primitive fertility has—at least, in a great degree—been restored. But the Bible is full of promises of blessings of this kind to the inhabitants of the millennial age. "Fear not, O land; be glad, and rejoice, for the Lord will do great things. Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field; for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit, and the fig-tree and the vine do yield their strength. Be glad, then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God." (Joel ii. 21–27.) The former rains and the latter rains are also to be restored. "The threshing-floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with wine and oil. The Lord hath sworn by His right hand, and by the arm of His strength, Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies, and the sons of strangers shall not drink of thy wine for

which thou hast laboured." (Isa. lxii. 8, 9.) "The mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with water." Joel iii. 18; Amos ix. 13.

Not only will the land be fertile and springs of water will abound, but the rivers will also be full of fish:— "There shall be a very great multitude of fish: their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many." Not only will the rivers abound in fish, but the Dead Sea will then be healed and will be full of fish. See Ezek. xlvii. 8–10. The whole country will become again like the garden of Eden, so that the people who may pass through it will say, with astonishment, "This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden." Ezek. xxxvi. 35.

The Israelites on their return will be exceedingly wealthy.

The remark, "He is as rich as a Jew," is at present one of frequent occurrence. And, although the great body of the Jewish people are by no means wealthy, and some of them are exceedingly poor, still, it is true that in all lands there are some of the house of Israel who do possess great wealth. It is no secret now that those who hold the purse-strings of this world's wealth are principally the men of Israel. The house of the Rothschilds alone has lent to the different sovereigns of Europe more than five hundred millions of dollars! And when the time comes for them to return to their own land they will be compelled of course to exchange their property for silver and for gold, and thus they will bring with them an amount of available wealth that

will surpass all human expectation. In all parts of the world where they have lived under despotic governments they have been most shamefully robbed and wronged. They have been plundered without mercy, and many have been tortured to death, with the hope of obtaining from them those hidden treasures of silver and of gold which their Gentile robbers have supposed that they possessed. When they return they will bring their silver and their gold with them; and doubtless God will give them favour in the eyes of the people among whom they may dwell, so that they will bestow upon them many great and valuable gifts.

When they came out of Egypt, God said he would give them favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they should not go out empty. (Ex. iii. 21.) And when they did go out, they *asked* (as the Hebrew word שָׁאַל, *shaal*, should be rendered, not *borrowed*) of the Egyptians, and they gave them such things as they required, so that, it is said, "they spoiled the Egyptians." (Ex. xii. 36.) And, we doubt not, when the time comes for them to return to Palestine by God's direction, He will again cause the Gentiles to give them such things as they may need for their safe return and also for the rebuilding of the city and of the temple of the Lord. At the expiration of the seventy years of the Jewish captivity in Babylon, God stirred up the heart of Cyrus to issue his proclamation throughout all his kingdom, saying, "Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia: The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He hath charged me to build Him an house at

Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all His people? His God be with him; and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and let him build the house of the Lord God of Israel. He is the God who is in Jerusalem. And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with *silver*, and with *gold*, and with *goods*, and with *beasts*, besides the free-will offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem." Ezek. i. 1–4.

This decree was faithfully executed: those who felt inclined to go did go, and those who remained behind helped those who went. The men of the place, the townsmen of the Jews, helped them also. All the holy vessels that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple in Jerusalem were restored to the Jews and brought back to Jerusalem.

It will be so again. When the set time to favour Zion has come, then God will again cause the Gentile nations to assist the Jews in their return, and also in rebuilding the waste places. We are expressly told that "they [the Jews] shall spoil them of the East together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them." (Isa. xi. 14.) The nations that have spoiled Israel will be compelled to refund to them much, if not all, that they have plundered from them. And the United States of America, which have ever protected Israel, will have an honourable part in assisting them to return to their own land, as is evident from the prophecy of Isaiah, (xviii. 1, 2.) "The wealth of the Gentiles [חֵיל גּוֹיִם] shall come unto thee."

(Isa. lx. 5.) And the fact stated by the Prophet Ezekiel in his prophecy (xxxviii. 12, 13) shows that it is the *wealth* of the restored Israelites that excites the cupidity of the hosts of Gog and Magog and leads them to come up in battle-array against them.

The recent discoveries of gold in California and in Australia, we doubt not, are not without reference to Israel. The enormous amount of silver and of gold that will be consumed in rebuilding the city of Jerusalem, the sanctuary of the Lord, and the temple, will be brought in a great degree from these places. The ships of Tarshish will be among the first to bring the scattered sons and daughters of Zion from afar, "their silver and their gold with them, because of the name of Jehovah thy God, and of the Holy One of Israel; for He hath glorified thee, and the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee." Isa. lx. 9, 10.

But before the final settlement of Israel in Palestine the nation will pass through great and sore trials. There is to be a time of trouble such as has never yet been among the nations of the earth. Israel will share largely in it. But they will be saved nationally, while the nations that oppose them shall in their governments be overthrown. The reader may examine Ezek. xx. 33–38, Zech. xii.–xiv., and Dan. xii. 1–3. There is a bright day yet to dawn upon Israel, and upon Zion, the city of the great king.

CHAPTER XVI.

GOG AND MAGOG.

THE facts in the prophecies are plain, but the order in which those predicted events will occur is in many instances very obscure. Time will make all these things plain. We must patiently wait until the providence of God shall make all these mysteries to be easily understood. It would seem, from the predictions of the prophets, and from the statements of our Lord and His apostles, that the order of these coming events will be after this manner.

1. The deliverance of Palestine from Gentile power. But this will not be done until "the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled." There are indications now that that time is near at hand. Preparatory to that event, the Ottoman power,—this scourge of both Jew and Christian,—that now holds the Holy Land, must relinquish its claim upon it. And it does seem that the indebtedness of the Sultan to the house of the Rothschilds for some forty millions of dollars or more is ordered by Providence, so that this land may be restored to the Israelites in payment for the amount thus borrowed from them. At all events, the Ottoman power must be broken, so that Palestine may become free. The mode of doing this, time will reveal. It does not seem to be possible that the Ottoman power, with an exhausted treasury, can

retain all the territory now claimed by the Sultan. The easiest way, and the one that seems to be marked out by Providence, for the Sultan to pay the debt he owes to the Rothschilds, (Israelites,) would be to cede to them a portion, at least, of the land of Palestine.

2. There must be peace proclaimed among the nations now occupying the territory of the old Roman Empire, so as to permit the Jews to return in quiet to their own land after it shall have passed out of the hands of the Sultan. This peace will not continue long; but it will be long enough to permit those of the house of Judah, the two tribes, who may occupy the land, to be settled in their unwalled towns and villages, as described by the Prophet Ezekiel, lxxxviii. 11.

3. The Jews who shall return will do so as Jews,—not as Christians, nor as believers on the Messiah. They will return, a mixed multitude, from all countries. In religion they will be one; but in education, intelligence, refinement, and wealth they will be very different. It would be no strange thing if difficulties should arise among them if they were left to reconstruct their national government themselves. How could they decide the varied questions that would necessarily arise among them? Hence it seems to me probable that God at first will permit them to live in the land under the joint protectorate of some of the European powers. France and England may be those powers. The present state of things indicates that they may be thus employed.

4. After a short season of peace, difficulties will arise: from what source time only will reveal. It may be

that the people themselves may rebel against their protectors. But what could they do in their defenceless state to carry on a war against their protectors, if one should be begun? The more probable cause of the war that is to rage there, and which will end in the great battle of Armageddon and in the overthrow of Gog and Magog, will be the desire of the surrounding nations to obtain the accumulated wealth of the Jews. And this, they will judge, can easily be done, because the Jews will be in a defenceless state.

5. The next event in the order of things will be the coming up of the army of Gog and Magog to attack the Jews in their own land and to rob them of the immense wealth they may possess.

It is important here to discriminate between the Gog and Magog spoken of by the Prophet Ezekiel and the Gog and Magog spoken of by John in Rev. xx. That they are not the same army is most evident from the following comparison.

1. In Ezekiel we find that Magog is the country of which Gog is the prince. The Hebrew reads thus:—"Son of man, set thy face against Gog, of the land of Magog, Prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal." The word Gog, as used by the Hebrews, is the same as *Kak* or *Sheik*, the general name for king among the Turks, Moguls, Tartars, and Chinese. And Magog is the country north of India and China, which the ancients called Scythia and which we call Tartary. The Turks are of Scythian origin. These hordes are to be led on by Gog, their prince, to oppose the Jews. But the Gog and Magog

mentioned in the Revelation are to be led on by Satan himself.

2. The army of Ezekiel is to be gathered from the north quarters, including Persia, Ethiopia, Gomar or the people of the Crimea, Togarmah, the Turcomanni or Armenians, and many people with them. The northern part of Europe and Asia will supply men for this army. The army of John is to be gathered from the four quarters of the earth. If, however, the word γη, (*ge*,) rendered *earth*, be translated *land*, as it often is, then the army may be collected from the same country,—viz.: the region round about Jerusalem.

3. Ezekiel describes his army as coming up against the Israelites settled in the land and on the mountains of Palestine, and after their return from their long dispersion, during which time the land had been allowed to lie waste. The people also are described as living in unwalled towns and villages, without bars and gates, and *before* the millennium.

John describes his army as coming up against the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and after the loosing of Satan,—that is, *after* the one thousand years of millennial glory on earth shall have passed away.

4. The army of Ezekiel shall prevail against Israel in a degree. Two parts of the whole number will be cut off and die, and only one-third will be left in the city. One-half of this third will be taken captive, and only the one-half be left in the city. Thus will Israel be sorely tried, and the sinners will be purged out of the land. (Zech. xii. 3, 9, xiv. 3.) That is called the time of Israel's trouble.

The army of John, though great, and compared to the sands of the sea for number, will only encompass the camp of the saints and the beloved city. They will not injure one of God's people. The army will be instantly and completely destroyed.

5. The destruction of Ezekiel's army will be accomplished by a variety of means. 1. Their own swords will be turned against themselves. (Zech. xiv. 13.) 2. Judah shall fight against them. (Verse 14.) 3. The Saviour shall personally appear the second time and discomfit them. (Zech. xiv. 3, 4.) 4. They shall be smitten by the plague. (Verse 12.) 5. There will be an earthquake, rain, hail, fire, and brimstone, by which they will be destroyed. Their carcasses will be devoured by ravenous birds of every sort and by the wild beasts of the field. (Ezek. xxxviii. 21, 22, xxxix. 2–4.) Only one-sixth part of all this mighty army will be spared.

The army of John is to be destroyed by fire out of heaven and to be entirely burned up. None of them are to survive.

6. The bones of the army of Gog and Magog of Ezekiel are to be buried in the land of Israel. Seven months will be occupied by the Israelites in burying these bones. Their weapons will serve the Israelites for seven years for fuel. A time of peace is to succeed the overthrow of this army. The city of Hamonah is to be built in commemoration of this great deliverance. Ezek. xxxix. 8–16.

The army of John is to be consumed by fire. Nothing is to be left of the bodies of the men, or of their weapons, that can be buried. Their destruction is to be

followed by the resurrection of the wicked dead, by the judgment and the close of that dispensation; and then follow the new heaven and the new earth.

From this brief comparison, it must be evident that these two armies are not one and the same. More than a thousand years intervene between them, though at present they are both in the future.

The idea of those who maintain that the army of John is composed of the wicked dead who are raised up after the thousand years are finished, and that these are the persons who are led by Satan to attack the camp of the saints and the beloved city, is without any solid foundation to rest upon.

In speaking of the binding of Satan, the prophet informs us that those who have a part in the first resurrection will rise at the beginning of the thousand years. But the rest of the dead will not live till the thousand years shall end. (Rev. xx. 5.) The time when they shall end will be after Satan shall be cast into the lake of fire, as we learn from verses 10–12. If the wicked dead are to arise *immediately* after the close of the thousand years, that will form the second resurrection. Then follows the gathering of the army of Gog and Magog, and their defeat, and the casting of Satan into the lake of fire. Then follows the resurrection of the dead, small and great, according to verses 12 and 13. This will form the *third* resurrection, which is certainly contrary to the whole tenor of the Scriptures on this subject.

The Greek word *αχρι*, (*achri*,) rendered *until* in Rev. xx. 5, does not necessarily lead us to suppose that the

event predicted to follow the thousand years will immediately follow that period. This is evident from the use of the word in Rom. v. 13:—"For *until* [*αχρι*] the law, sin was in the world." This certainly does not mean that after the giving of the law on Mount Sinai there was no more sin. Sin still continues. So also in Rom. viii. 22 the word is found:—"For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together *until* [*αχρι*] now." We are not to suppose that the groaning here spoken of ceased immediately after the apostle wrote his Epistle to the Romans because he uses the word *αχρι*, (*until.*) It is so in the passage under consideration. All that John meant to teach by the use of the word in Rev. xx. 5 is that the rest of the dead lived not again *until* the thousand years were finished. They did not live before they were finished. Nor does he mean to say that they lived *immediately* after them, but *merely after* they were finished. The precise time when they lived again is revealed in the twelfth verse, which is *after* Satan had been cast into the lake of fire, and after the appearance of the Judge upon His great white throne. Hence it does appear to me most manifest that the army that Satan collects after his release from the bottomless pit cannot possibly be the wicked dead raised out of their graves.

The question then arises,—*Whence comes the army of Gog and Magog, if they be not composed of raised dead?*

To this we reply, there can be no difficulty in finding them, if we allow the Scriptures to guide us in our search for them.

It is most evident from the Scriptures (see Isa. lxv. 20 for an instance) that the millennial dispensation will be a mixed one, in which there will be both good and evil. Children will be born then, as now, with a depraved nature. But there will be no Satan to tempt or to deceive them, for Satan and all his host will be cast out from this earth. We have reason to believe that, after the few wicked at the commencement of this blessed period shall have been cut off, (Isa. lxv. 20,) the children will all be regenerated in early life. The promise contained in the prophecy of Jeremiah (xxxi. 34) and repeated by the Apostle Paul in Heb. viii. 11 certainly includes all the house of Israel. It is there affirmed that "they shall all know the Lord, from the *least* of them unto the greatest of them." This passage does not teach that all the Gentiles will thus know the Lord. But the promise contained in Hab. ii. 14—"For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea"—seems to teach us that true piety will be not only universally prevalent, but that every individual on the face of the earth will be a holy person. Being renewed by the Holy Spirit, they cannot perish. They will all of them be finally saved.

At the close of this period of blessedness and of peace, Satan is loosed from his prison. He comes then back to this earth full of hate against Jesus, who is then reigning, King of kings and Lord of lords, on the earth, and also against all the race of man. He comes back alone. His hosts of evil spirits are still in the lake of fire. What then does Satan find on earth? He finds

human beings filling the earth, and just such persons as there were on it when he was cast into the bottomless pit. They are all renewed in heart; but they are subject to passions such as human nature has ever exhibited. Now, while all those who may be on the earth at the release of Satan will be saved, yet what will be the condition of the children who may be born on earth after his release? They will be exposed to the temptations of Satan as children and youth now are. And if parental government after a few years should relax, and the piety of the people be less ardent, and many of the youth grow up unconverted to God, it is easy to see that, during the "little season" Satan is to be loosed, he might influence many throughout the world to break through all the moral restraints that they were under, and to unite themselves together in opposition to the wholesome laws under which the world will then be placed.

Whatever may be the form of the temptation by which Satan will assail the minds of the people, (which the Bible does not reveal,) one thing is certain:—he will succeed in deceiving many. He will go out into all parts of the world, and he will gather together a host of deceived and ungodly men, (all of whom will have been born after the thousand years are finished,) and with them he will make an assault on the beloved city Jerusalem, and against the camp of the saints, the sanctuary of the Lord, which is north of Jerusalem some thirty miles, where the saints will be.

Satan's object in this attack will be to dethrone the Messiah, the Seed of the woman, from his possession of this world, and to endeavour to wrest its sceptre out of

His hands. Satan upon a former occasion offered to surrender up this world (which he now holds as its prince by usurpation) and let the Son of man possess it, if he, Jesus, would only fall down and worship him, or acknowledge that Satan was the rightful heir to the throne of earth. But our Lord could not do that. He spurned the insulting offer, and bade Satan to depart. Still Satan holds possession of this world. But he is to lose it and to be bound for a thousand years. After his release from the pit he will endeavour again to repossess it. He will put forth his mightiest efforts to destroy the empire of Christ on earth. He will not do like many earthly conquerors,—strive to gain merely a portion of it. But, on the contrary, he will make his attack directly against Christ Himself and His saints who shall be with Him. This will be his last, his mightiest effort to destroy man. He knows what will be the result of his defeat; and yet he will make the attack, though he can have no hope of success. His hosts of rebel angels, who have served him so faithfully for so long a time, will still be in the lake of fire where they were cast when Satan was bound and cast into the bottomless pit. And he knows well that he is doomed to the same place for his persevering and relentless hatred of God, and of man made in the image of God. It is the madness of despair that urges him on. Oh, what must be the enmity of that spirit that can, in view of the eternal wrath that awaits him, manifest such hatred of God and of humanity!

But with what motives will the people come up with him against Jesus? This is a question we may not be

able to answer. But it seems probable that Satan will excite a spirit of dissatisfaction, in the souls of many of the unconverted, with the pure and holy government of Christ. And it is probable that this spirit of rebellion will manifest itself especially among what we now call the Gentile portion of the world. For it is plain that during the millennial dispensation the house of Israel, the brethren of Jesus according to the flesh, will hold the priority as to rank among the nations of the earth. It will be no difficult thing for Satan to stir up a spirit of jealousy in the minds of those born after the thousand years against their Jewish brethren, and make them envious of the peculiar honours that Jesus bestows upon them. The sanctuary of our Lord is to be in the midst of Israel, and they are to have honours conferred upon them which the Gentile descendants will not have; though all will be cared for and kindly protected and blessed under the peaceful reign of the Prince of peace. Human nature will be the same then that it is now. And, with the evil suggestions of Satan that the Gentiles should be admitted to equal honours with the brethren of our Lord, it is not difficult to conceive how hatred to Israel, and then, by an easy step, hatred to Jesus and his government, should be stirred up in the minds of many. He will most assuredly conceal his own motives from them; for, we are told, he will deceive them, and lead them to expect results they never can realize.

Without affirming that this will be the plan adopted by Satan to deceive the Gentile nations of the earth, and to bring them up in battle-array against Israel, all

we can say is, it seems very likely to be so. The twelve tribes will occupy the Holy Land enlarged, and this revolt will be outside of the Israelitish community. The nations in the four quarters of the earth are to come against Jerusalem and the saints. And the more that our Lord loves Israel and His saints the more will Satan stir up the hatred of the deceived hosts against them. But this army, like the one of the same name before the millennium, will meet with a complete overthrow. When Satan, with his army, in this his final assault on man, shall be overthrown, he will be cast into the lake of fire. The judgment will immediately follow. But, after the destruction of the Gog and Magog spoken of by Ezekiel, the millennium and the glorious reign of the Son of man are to follow. The two armies are not the same.

ARMAGEDDON.

The army of Gog and Magog, which, the Prophet Ezekiel informs us, will come up against the Israelites restored, is the same that is spoken of by the Prophet John in Rev. xvi. 14–16. The place where they shall be gathered together is called, in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon. The word if written in the Hebrew would be either Har-Megeddon, or Harmah-Geddon. The meaning of the first would be (*har*) the mountain (*Megeddon*) of Megiddo. The meaning of the other division of the word would be (*harmah*) the destruction of (*geddon*) their armies. The compound word is derived from the Hebrew words *herem*, a curse, and *gad*, a troop or multitude.

If we take the first division of the word to be the one that was in the mind of the prophet, then this great battle will be fought upon or near the mountain and city of Megiddo. Megiddo was a fenced city that belonged in ancient times to the half-tribe of Manasseh on the west side of the river Jordan, and about forty-four miles north of the city of Jerusalem. Near this city the army of Jabin, the king of Canaan, was routed by Deborah and Barak. (Judges i. 27, v. 19.) King Josiah was also slain near this place by Pharaoh-Necho, the King of Egypt. (2 Chron. xxxv. 20–24.) Josiah, contrary to the command of God, went out to fight against the King of Egypt, and was killed. When Jabin was killed the Canaanites mourned greatly; and when Josiah was slain the Israelites mourned with a great mourning. In consequence of this, the place was noted as a place of mourning. It will be a place for great mourning again, though for another cause. Zech. xii. 1.

If we take the other meaning of the word,—viz.: "the destruction of their armies,"—then no particular place is designated. The name is merely descriptive, and is given in anticipation of the event, which is yet future. But there are portions of Scripture which speak of this great battle; and they do not leave us in the dark as to the place where this great battle is to be fought which is to decide the destinies of this world forever. They fix the place in the land of Judea and near the city of Jerusalem. The Prophet Zechariah expressly declares that God will gather all the nations (כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם, all the

Gentiles) against Jerusalem to battle, and that they are to be destroyed there. (Zech. xiv. 2–15.) The Prophet Joel says that God will bring all the nations into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and there will He plead with them concerning His people, and His heritage, Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and for His land which they have divided. (Joel iii. 2.) This gathering of the nations, and this judgment upon them, will be after the Israelites shall have been restored. The word Jehoshaphat means "the judgment of the Lord," and is derived from the Hebrew words יְהוָה (Jehovah,) and שָׁפַט, (*chaphet*, he judges.)

The Prophet Ezekiel informs us that this great army shall be brought up against the people of Israel, who shall be settled in Jerusalem and in the mountains of Judea, and that there they will be destroyed. (Ezek. xxxviii. and xxxix.) Thus, from the different accounts of this great battle as given us by the prophets, we know that it will take place in the land of Judea and near to Jerusalem.

Those who would make any other place on earth the scene of these wonders sadly mistake the meaning of the prophets. The very fact itself stated by Zechariah the prophet, (chap. xiv. 4, 5,) that God will, in that day of Israel's distress, cleave the Mount of Olives in twain before Jerusalem, so as to form a great valley, that His people may run into it and be saved, while His wrath shall be poured out upon their foes, shows, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that the battle is to be fought round about Jerusalem.

As our Lord, in referring to his own death, said that

a prophet could not perish out of Jerusalem, and He did die there, because it was so predicted of Him; so, in reference to this great battle of Armageddon, it cannot possibly take place out of Judea. The word of God is plain on this point. Let men follow the teachings of the prophets, and not their own fancies or theories, and they will avoid those errors into which multitudes now are falling.

That there will be wars and rumours of wars before that great battle shall be fought is what the Scriptures teach. But let us not mistake these preparatory movements among the nations of the old Roman Empire for the battle itself. The battle is not that of one of the Gentile nations against another; but it is an agreement among themselves to destroy Israel restored, and to rob them of the untold wealth that they will then possess. All prophesying, therefore, or calculation, as to the time when this dispensation shall end, and when the millennial glory of the Church and of the world shall begin, and which leave out the restoration of Israel to their own land, and the great fact that it is against them that this army is to be collected, is visionary in the extreme. There can be no peace and quiet to this sin-tossed world while Satan remains unbound. And his binding cannot take place until he shall have gathered his army against Israel restored. And Israel cannot be restored while the Gentile powers tread down Jerusalem and hold that city in their own hands. Whatever tends to weaken the Turkish power and to set Israel free from their oppressors marks out the progress of events in the right direction. We pretend not to say what will be

the varied steps in the chain of events, or what troubles will arise among the European powers before their final gathering and overthrow; but one thing is certain,—God will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all the surrounding nations who shall gather themselves together against her. The day of earth's redemption from Satanic rule, and the day of Israel's freedom from Gentile oppression, cannot be far off. The providence of God is rapidly fulfilling his prophecies, and we wait with patience, while we watch with prayerful interest the signs of the times and the approach of the day of the Lord.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE TIME OF THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

When will our Lord return and take to himself the power and reign? This question has been often asked. Calculations have been made, and answers have been given to it, which may have satisfied those who gave them. But hitherto all these appointed times have failed. He has not yet appeared. And the question still is asked, When will our Lord appear? Scoffers may insultingly ask, Where is the promise of His coming? What has become of the promise? for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation? They may mock those humble believers whose hope is in the coming of the Lord; but that does not shake their faith in His

coming, nor does it destroy the truth of the promise itself. The Saviour will come again; for He promised, saying, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also." (John xiv. 3.) The certainty of His coming again—not spiritually, but personally, for He has never been absent spiritually—is thus put beyond a doubt. Yes, this same Jesus shall so come in like manner as He was seen to go up into heaven. This is the declaration of the two men, clothed in white apparel, who spake to the disciples as they stood gazing up into heaven, whither their Lord had just gone. (Acts i. 10, 11.) Our Lord will return.

But *when* will He return? Can we know the time? or have we any definite information on this most interesting subject? That the time of His second coming is fixed in the purpose of God—the day and the hour of that solemn and soul-thrilling event—is what the Scriptures clearly affirm. But is that day revealed to us? Here, too, the Scriptures are equally plain. It is *not revealed to us.* The evangelists inform us that of "that day and of that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." Mark xiii. 32; Matt. xxiv. 36.

We must not suppose, from this language, that the Son of man is ignorant of the day of His return to earth and of the time when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. This is the view that the Socinian translators of the New Testament take of the passage. On the expression "nor the Son," they have the following note:—"Am-

brose cites MSS. which omit this clause, and complains that it was introduced by the Arians. But all MSS. and versions now extant retain it, and it is cited by early writers. It proves that Christ is not God, because his knowledge is limited." This is a summary mode of settling this vital question. It is exposition with a vengeance. Such a wilful and deliberate perversion of the word of God deserves the severest rebuke. Many, however, who maintain the divinity of Christ, suppose that our Lord used this language in reference to His human nature. Their exposition would be, "As God He knows the day of His return, but not as man."

This exposition does not satisfy us. The difficulty can be easily solved by a reference to 1 Cor. ii. 2, where the Greek word is used in a *causative* sense, and corresponds to the *Hiphel* sense of the Hebrew verb. The apostle says, "I determined *not to know* any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." The expression *ου του ειδεναι* means, rather, *not to make known* any thing among them but Christ. It surely cannot be that the apostle resolved to be, and actually was, ignorant of every thing among the Corinthians but Christ. But that he should spend his time and his energies in *making known* to them nothing but Christ and salvation through Him, is what he affirms. This was the fact concerning him. Now, by giving the same meaning to the same word as used by our Lord, the sense is plain, and there is no intimation in His language that He is not divine. The meaning of our Lord, then, is, "Of that day and that hour no man maketh known; no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." And this

exactly accords with what He said to His disciples on a subsequent occasion, and just before His ascension to heaven. "It is not for you to know [γνωναι] the times or the seasons [when the kingdom shall be restored to Israel, and which is in connection with His coming] which the Father hath put in His own power." The idea, then, is this. Our Lord came to this world for a specific purpose. In the execution of that purpose he was not as a prophet to reveal to His people the day or the hour of His second coming. The day will be revealed when He shall appear, but not before.

Have we, then, no information on this subject whatever? Is the whole subject wrapped up in an impenetrable veil of obscurity? Far from it. We know that our Lord will come, and that He will come *before* the millennium. We know *where* He will come. We also know the peculiar position which the Jewish and the Gentile world will be in at the time of His coming. And when those peculiar circumstances shall take place, then those in that day may know that the appearance of their Lord is soon to be in their midst. The day and the hour they may not know; but they will know that it is so near that they will be justified in expecting His appearance at any hour.

As to the *place* where our Lord will appear, we know that it will be nearly over Jerusalem: probably He will descend to the very spot on earth from which He ascended up into heaven. The Prophet Zechariah (xiv. 4) tells us that *His feet* shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east. This passage, then, clearly predicts His future second

coming, and also marks out distinctly the *place* where He is to appear. To look for our Lord's descent to earth in any other place than on the Mount of Olives is to look for it where the Scriptures declare that it cannot take place.

The *time*, too, when our Lord shall appear is also foretold, both by Ezekiel and by Zechariah. Both of these prophets inform us that it will be when the Israelites shall be besieged in Jerusalem after their return to their own land. Ezekiel says it will be when Gog shall come against the land of Israel. (Ezek. xxxviii. 18–20.) Then it is that all the assembled hosts shall shake at the *presence* of the Lord. The Hebrew word מִפָּנַי (*mi-penai*) always means the actual personal presence of the person or thing referred to, whenever it is used. There is no exception to its uniform use in this place.

The Prophet Zechariah is more particular in his description of the time of our Lord's descent to earth. He brings the time to be under such peculiar circumstances that it will be impossible for those in that day who will be looking for His coming to mistake the time. They may not know the precise hour nor the precise day; but they doubtless will know, within a few days or hours of the time, when He will appear for the deliverance of His people and the destruction of His and their enemies. It appears that Jerusalem will be beseiged by the surrounding Gentile nations. Two parts of the inhabitants of the land will be cut off and die, and the third part will be left in the land and will be brought through great distress. The city shall be taken, and one-half of them shall be led into captivity; but the residue shall

not be cut off. It is at this point of time, when the Jews shall be in their deepest distress, that they shall call upon God, and He will hear them. Then shall the Lord come forth and fight against those nations. He shall descend to the earth, and His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives before Jerusalem on the east. The mountain will cleave in twain, and a great valley will be formed. Into that the Jews shall flee and shall be saved, while the wrath of the Lord—pestilence, rain, hailstones, fire, and brimstone—will fall upon their foes and discomfit them.

The glorious appearance of our Lord, who shall come in His own glory and in the glory of the Father, with His saints and holy angels, will strike terror into every heart. If the handwriting in unknown characters upon the wall of the palace of the King of Assyria struck such terror into the hearts of the king and of his nobles as we read it did, what must be the terror of those enemies of God's people in the day that they shall see Jesus Himself descend to save His people and to punish His foes! It will be no marvellous thing that they should wail in anguish of soul. Oh, how soon will their wicked boasting and godless triumphing over the helpless people of God be turned into shame! The triumphing of the wicked is short. The Lord will destroy them.

It is perfectly vain, then, for any one to affirm that the Lord will again appear on our earth before Jerusalem shall be beseiged by her enemies, and before the city shall be taken. Men may make their calculations,—and doubtless they will,—and multitudes will be need-

lessly alarmed at the result of their own miscalculations; but those who calmly study the predictions of the Bible and watch the signs of the times may know where they are on the prophetic chart. Let no one, then, be deceived. The Lord has fixed the time for His return to earth. When we shall see Israel in their own land,—when we shall see the army of Gog and Magog encamped against them,—then may we know that the Lord for a certainty will in a short time appear. Surely this is knowledge sufficient for us. And while we prayerfully watch the progress of events, and see that God is preparing to restore the wandering tribes of Israel to their own land, we know that the day of our redemption draweth nigh, and that soon Israel and the Church will be free.

Many calculations are made, and the most of writers on this subject suppose that somewhere within the next thirty years—within the year 1866 or 1886—this great battle will have taken place, and the Lord will again stand upon Mount Olivet, and, waving His consecrating hand over earth, will cause the curse to depart from it and the blessings of life and of salvation to flow over it to its widest extent. We pretend not to say that this will or will not be so; for, while the dates are given us in the word of God, yet, as it does not concern us to know the precise day of our Lord's return, but to watch and to pray that we may be prepared for His coming, our fervent and oft-repeated prayer should be, Lord, let that glorious day soon appear. "Come, Lord Jesus; come quickly."

From every thing that now appears in the Jewish and

in the Gentile world, from the gradual loosing of the hold of the Turk on Palestine,—"Immanuel's land,"—from the deep interest that both Jews and Christians are now taking in every thing that appertains to the Holy Land and to the temporal and spiritual welfare of Israel, and from the unsettled state of feeling throughout the whole territory of the old Roman Empire, we know for a surety that the day of the Lord is now nigh at hand, even at the doors. May we be ready for the glorious appearing of the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ!

CHAPTER XVIII.

MESSIAH'S REIGN.

When our Lord was on the earth, all His teachings and the miracles He wrought went to prove that He was "the son of David, the son of Abraham," the legal heir to the throne of His father David, according to the prediction of the Prophet Isaiah, (ix. 6, 7,) and according to the announcement of the angel to Mary, that the Lord God should give unto Him the throne of His father David, that He should reign over the house of Israel forever, and that of His kingdom there should be no end. (Luke i. 32, 33.) It was the expectation of His disciples that He would at that time take to Himself the power and reign. As to the *time* of His reigning, they were disappointed. They could not foresee that the Jews would then reject their Messiah, and that in consequence of that rejection He would reject

that generation and introduce a new dispensation, in which the Gentiles would be made fellow-heirs with faithful Israel, and of the same body and partakers of the promise in Christ by the gospel. (Eph. iii. 6.) But as to the *fact* itself,—viz.: that Jesus came to reign, and that He ultimately will reign, upon the throne of His father David, is what the Scriptures most certainly declare. And our Lord nowhere and at no time ever intimated that they were mistaken as to the fact itself. He never said He would not reign. On the contrary, He most unequivocally declared that He would reign, and that His saints are to reign with Him on the earth. 2 Tim. ii. 12; Rev. v. 10, xi. 15.

When Pilate asked Him the question, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" the answer of our Lord, if it has any definite meaning at all, is an affirmative one. He answered, "My kingdom is not of *this* world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but *now* is my kingdom not *from hence*." (John xviii. 36.) To understand this language of our Lord, it is of importance to observe that the Greek word κοσμος, (*kosmos*,) when used to mean the people on this earth, always means *the collective body of mankind dwelling at any period of time on the earth*. It differs from the word *aion*, rendered *world* and *age*, in this particular:—*aion* means *a particular era*, or *a certain period of time*.

Our Lord does not here deny that He would reign upon this earth, and over people upon the earth who would then be in the flesh. He does not mean to affirm that His kingdom is wholly spiritual, and not temporal

also. But He does say that His kingdom, which is to be under the whole heaven, is not to consist of that body of Jewish or Gentile people that were then dwelling on the earth, for they had shown themselves to be unworthy of it by rejecting Jesus the King. Hence the kingdom should be taken from them of that generation, and should be given to a *nation* (*εθνος*, not a different [*γενεα*, *genea*] race or class of people, but to a nation differently organized and having a different national existence) who should bring forth the fruits thereof. (Matt. xxi. 43.) If He had meant to set up His Messianic kingdom at that time, and to have had that *class* of the Jewish people who then existed to be His subjects, then they would have prevented Him from being cast off by the people. They would have placed Him on the throne of His father David, and would not have permitted Him to be delivered to the Jews. They would have fought for Him, if necessary. But His kingdom as Messiah, as the Son of David, is not *now* from hence. Though it will be on the earth, yet *now*, saith our Lord, "My kingdom is not from hence," (*εντευθεν.*) It does not commence *now*. It is a future event, and not from this point of time.

This plain declaration of our Lord led Pilate to ask again the question concerning His real official character,—"Art thou a king, then?" To this He answers, "Thou sayest [the truth, and the truth is] that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." Here again our Lord declares that He is a King, and that for that purpose among others was He born in the likeness of sinful flesh. He was a King before His in-

carnation; but He has a kingdom over which He cannot reign as King without assuming the human form and without His being descended literally from David the king. He is then to be a King in such a sense as He could not be unless He be born as man and born as the son of David. He tells Pilate that He came into the world to testify to the truth that He is a King,—or to testify concerning Himself, for He is the way, and the truth, and the life. And every one that is of the truth, or a believer in Him, will hear His voice. But the Jews of that generation were not believers in Him personally as their Messiah, though they did then and do yet believe in a Messiah to come; and hence they would not hear Him. As a consequence of this, the proffered kingdom was taken from them, and it is not yet set up, for Israel has not yet accepted the Son of David—Jesus of Nazareth—as the Messiah, the Shiloh, the One sent from God.

Now, though the disciples of our Lord were disappointed as to the *time* of His reigning, yet they were not mistaken as to the *fact* itself. Jesus must reign or the predictions concerning Him cannot be fulfilled. He has exercised His prophetic and priestly offices on earth and in the flesh; but He has never yet been King in the flesh, or in human nature. He came to be a King; but His people rejected Him. He has been crucified and rejected of men, as Moses was by Israel in Egypt; but He will yet come and exercise His office as King, and will subdue all things unto Himself, so that He may fulfil all the offices of prophet, of priest, and of king, in human nature, for the benefit of His Church. His reigning as God over

all things, or as Mediator over His ransomed people, can never be the fulfilment of those prophecies which speak of His reigning as King over all the earth, and as the son of David over the house of Israel.

There is an aspect of this subject which I would here present, and one which is seldom held up to the view of the Church. Our Lord is the promised seed of the woman, which is to bruise the serpent's head, and He is also the son of David and the heir to David's throne. There are thoughts here which it would be well for the Church of Christ and for the world to think of.

It is evident, from the Scriptures, that when man was created he was installed as king over all the earth. He had dominion over it. That dominion he lost by his transgressing the commandment of the Lord. From that day Satan became the usurped ruler of this world. Our Lord acknowledges the fact that he is the prince of this world. (John xiv. 30.) Now, though he is the prince of this world, and although the whole world lieth in wickedness or under the power of the wicked one, (1 John v. 19,) and although he is the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, yet he hath nothing in Christ Jesus our Lord, though He is the seed of the woman and the son of man. Here then is one in human nature, and, though he is in the likeness of sinful flesh, yet is he not sinful, and Satan hath nothing in him of a moral character that finds its likeness in himself. He is holy; Satan is unholy.

Satan has gained an advantage over humanity. It now groans under his oppressive and cruel sway. But the promise is that human nature is to bruise Satan's

headship here, and to rescue this earth, and man upon it, from his power. This can be done only by our Lord, —the promised seed of the woman. It is not the divine nature or divinity alone that is to crush down and completely destroy the empire of Satan. That would be an easy thing; and the defeat would be one which might afford Satan some ground for boasting. For what is the creature to the creator? But it is the seed of the woman —it is that nature that has been so long down-trodden—that is to tread Satan down. It is this that will mortify the pride of the deceiver of mankind, when he finds that the One who was born in Bethlehem and whom he sought to slay by the sword of Herod,—the One to whom he promised to surrender the whole earth which he had taken from Adam by treachery, if Jesus would but just fall down and worship him,—the One whom he assailed in the garden of Gethsemane and on the cross, —it is this One—the Man of sorrows, and the One acquainted with grief—that is to cast the usurper out from earth and bind him in the bottomless pit for a thousand years.

When our Lord came to earth he offered to set up his kingdom then; and if Israel had accepted him as their Messiah He would then have entered upon His office as King in human nature over earth. But they did not accept Him. He must then return, so that He may reign, and may thus fulfil the predictions of the prophets concerning Him, and so that He may in human nature cast Satan out from this world. I am well aware that the human and the divine natures of Christ can never be separated, and that what our Lord does will be done by

the man Christ Jesus. Yet there are acts which He will perform which are more especially to be attributed to His human nature; and this binding of Satan and this reigning over all the earth are among those things. He must, as the seed of the woman, bruise Satan's head. And, as He did not do that at His first advent, there is an absolute necessity for His return in His bodily presence in human nature, so that this prediction may be fulfilled.

Our Lord is also the son of David. As such He is the rightful heir to David's throne. It was predicted by the Prophet Isaiah (chap. ix. 6, 7) that David should have his throne established forever, that this should be done in his son, (2 Sam. vii. 12, 13; Ps. cxxxii. 11; Acts ii. 30,) and that this son is Jesus, according to the prediction of the angel in Luke i. 32, 33. As Jesus has never yet possessed the throne of His father David, it is certain that He must do it, or the prediction fails to be accomplished.

It is very evident, from the prediction of Isaiah ix. 6, 7, that the centre of Messiah's earthly kingdom will be Jerusalem,—the holy hill of Zion. As the kingdom is to be set up with Israel, that land must be first reclaimed from the dominion of Satan. The throne of David must be first built up. Our Lord as the son of David must inherit that land which God gave to His father David. As his son He can inherit no more. And if He had no legal claim to any other portion of the globe, then Satan might still keep possession of it. But of the increase of the government and peace of the Messiah there is no end, or termination to it, upon the throne of David.

Judea is not to limit the boundaries of the earthly empire of the Son of man. His kingdom is to extend beyond that on all sides. And it is to so extend as to fill all the earth; for the kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.

By what right, then, it may be asked, does Jesus, our Lord, take possession of the earth to reign over it? I answer, In virtue of His being the Son of man and the heir of all things. By His obedience to the law of God, and by His sufferings and death, He has reconciled God to man, and has become the propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins only, but for the whole world. (1 John ii. 2.) He has thus become the heir of all things. (Heb. i. 2.) Then, being so, He must in due time enter upon His inheritance and bring the whole world to bow in meek submission to His will.

> "Jesus must reign where'er the sun
> Does his successive journeys run:
> His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
> Till suns shall rise and set no more."

As to the particular ordering of the kingdom of our Lord on earth, that is left for a future time. It does not, of course, immediately concern us. It will all be revealed in due time. The outlines of the whole mode of worship—so far at least as it concerns Israel restored—are clearly marked out in the last eight chapters of the prophecy of Ezekiel. The city of Jerusalem is to be built upon a most magnificent scale. It is to be in the portion of the land designated as "the holy oblation." It is to be nearly ten miles square. The sanc-

tuary of the Lord, and where our Lord will dwell, and where He will especially manifest His millennial glory, will be about thirty miles north of Jerusalem. It is evident that sacrifices will constitute one part of the appointed worship. They will not be offered for the same purpose that they were under the Levitical law. They may be merely eucharistic, and not expiatory. The fact itself is plain. They will be offered, and the use of them and their importance will then be apparent to all and will be fully understood. Our Lord certainly has the right of prescribing the *mode* in which He would have His people worship Him then; and, although we may not now see the propriety of their worshipping Him in any other way than that in which we now do, still, it is evident that the mode will be greatly changed. The Lord's supper certainly will not be celebrated then; for we are to observe it, and to show forth by it His death, only until He come. The language of our Lord to His disciples, as recorded by the Evangelist Luke, (xxii. 29, 30,) shows us that the whole state of things will be widely different from any thing with which we are now familiar. He says, "As my Father hath appointed unto me a kingdom, I appoint unto you, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (See the Greek of this passage.) The whole state of things will be entirely different from what we see now. All things which appertain to the Church and the state or kingdom will be headed up in Christ. (Eph. i. 10.) He will be head over all things. All the laws by which the whole world will then be governed will proceed directly from Him. "Out of Zion shall

go forth the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Isa. ii. 3.) The law of the Ten Commandments came forth from God from Mount Sinai. This law from Zion which is yet to go forth is that which shall appertain to the regulation and the government of the whole world during the reign of the Messiah, as the son of David, sitting upon the throne of His earthly kingdom.

The moral condition of the world will then be brought to the highest degree of perfection that can be attained while sin is still found on the earth. It is delightful to read the glowing and soul-cheering descriptions of the happy and blissful reign of the Messiah which will then take place, and which are given us by the prophets. Peace will exist between man and man. Nation shall not war with nation. The animal world will be at peace with each other and with man also. They will dwell together in harmony and love. And then will the predictions of Isaiah (chaps. xi. and lxv.) find their literal fulfilment. The peaceful scenes of Eden will again appear. The sceptre will be in the hands of human nature, in the person of our Lord, and all the former dominion of man will again be under Him.

The dominion over the fowls of the air, the beasts of the field, and the fish of the sea, and over all the earth, which God gave to man at first, (Gen. i. 26,) and which he lost, has never yet been regained. Human nature strives to regain it. And this struggling among men for power, which is manifested everywhere, only shows us that it is weak, sinful, and down-trodden human nature striving to regain by its own unaided power what was lost in Adam the first. The feeling itself is not wrong. It is

a part of our nature. But the mode used in trying to regain that dominion is wrong. Men are contented now if they gain power and dominion over the animal world and over their fellows, even though that power gained be used for their own injury and for the injury of those they may control. Satan, the god of this world, does most unremittingly urge men forward to obtain the dominion over others. Thus he satisfies some and disappoints others. Hence he keeps the world of sinners in perpetual strife the one against the other, each seeking to obtain that which never can be obtained while he remains the usurped prince of this world. In Jesus, the Son of man, the second Adam, the second *likeness* of God, as the name Adam signifies, will this dominion be regained; but in no one else. When He comes, the sceptre of earthly dominion will come back again into the hands of humanity, from which it shall never again be wrested. For "the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom *under the whole heaven*, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High." (Dan. vii. 27.) It will then be strictly true that

> "In Christ the sons of Adam boast
> More blessings than their father lost."

No human pen can describe the blissful state that this world will be in during the reign of the Messiah. There will be no horrid wars on the earth, no jealousy among the nations that may then exist, no varied and conflicting forms of government; there will be no religious or sectarian feuds, no spirit of antichrist to harass the Church of God; no pagan altars or heathen rites will

then be found to fill the now-called heathen world with scenes revolting and abominable; the Babel tongues of earth will all be gone. The language of man was confounded for a wise purpose, and also as a punishment for the sins of men. But that will be removed; for, saith the Lord, by the mouth of the Prophet Zephaniah, (iii. 9,) "For then I will make anew for the people a pure language, that they all may call upon the name of Jehovah to serve Him with one consent." The Hebrew word *Hapshak* means to change the nature or condition of a thing; and that change is of a language that has in it many words that convey impure ideas, to one that will be perfectly pure. Houbigant uses the word *Shaphak*, to *pour out*. The idea is the same. The nature of this change in the language of the earth at that time—for there will be but one language, as at first—is clearly stated by the Prophet Zechariah, (chap. xiii. 2.) "And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, [out of the earth, מִן־הָאָרֶץ,] and they shall be no more remembered; and I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit [Satan] to pass out of the earth." As the empire of Satan is to be overthrown and he himself to be banished from the earth, it is proper that the very names of the idols, the false gods by whose worship he drew the people away from the worship of the Lord, should also be blotted out from the memory of the people. All the religious thoughts and feelings and associations of the family of man will be pure, for the language—the sign of their ideas—will be pure. There will

be no language in existence then to express an impure idea.

What a contrast things will then present to what we see and know do now exist! Blessed indeed will be those who shall dwell under the peaceful and pure reign of the Prince of peace, Immanuel, God with us. Oh that that blessed day may speedily dawn upon our groaning, sinful world, and fill it with righteousness and joy and peace!

CHAPTER XIX.

MESSIAH'S KINGDOM DELIVERED UP.

From the remarks we have already made on the subject of "Messiah's reign" in the previous chapters, we are the better prepared to understand what the apostle means by the delivering up of the kingdom to God the Father, and by the Son being in subjection to Him, so that God may be all in all. 1 Cor. xv. 24–28.

The first thing that demands our attention in the illustration of this most interesting subject is to find out, if possible, what kingdom is referred to by the apostle, and which he assures us the Son is to surrender to the Father at the time of the end. If that can be satisfactorily ascertained, then we shall have but little difficulty with what follows.

The opinion of the great body of commentators, and of the members of the Church pretty generally, is that

this kingdom is the *mediatorial kingdom of Christ.* Can it be that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is, at a fixed period in the future, to give up His mediatorial office and kingdom and thus cease to be a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek? Ps. cx. 4.

Our object now is to inquire whether this is so or not.

By recurring to the primitive state of man, we learn that he was created perfectly holy, and that he was governed by the pure and holy law of God then as well as now. The principles upon which God's government of man was then carried forward were those of justice alone. There was no place for the exercise of mercy towards man, for the plain reason that he needed none; for mercy is favour shown to the sinful and undeserving.

In the government of God over man as at first established, the Divine Word shared then, and does yet share, an equal authority with the Father and the Holy Spirit, for it was the government of the Trinity over the creature man. This government of the Second Person of the Trinity was exercised by Him in virtue of His divine nature and of His being one of the Persons of the Godhead. It extended over all the works of His hands. He governed then the whole creation, and yet governs it, as God. This authority He can never resign; for it is a necessary consequence of His divine nature. This kingdom we may call the everlasting kingdom of Christ.

How long our first parents remained on this earth before they sinned against God, we know not. The

time was long enough, however, to form one dispensation in the history of the human race. It was the first and the only period of perfect purity and of peace with which the world has as yet been blessed, or ever will be until Satan shall be bound and the curse be cast out from the earth, and the new heaven and the new earth appear.

Man, being in honour, abode not, (בַּל־יָלִין,) tarried not for a night, as some would render the passage. But, without attempting to decide how long man retained his primitive innocency and dominion, we know that he had fallen before the birth of his first-born son, who was born in the likeness of his sinful parentage. Adam lost the image and the likeness of God in which he had been created. If now God's primitive mode of government over man had been carried forward, the result would have been the same in his case as it was in the case of the angels who had sinned before him. The justice of God would have cut him off from all hope of mercy, and the earth might never have been peopled with the posterity of Adam. But God did not choose to pursue this course towards him. He spared man and provided for him a Saviour. That God might have prevented the introduction of sin into this world none will deny; that He might have glorified Himself eternally in the sight of all intelligent beings, without the introduction of so much evil and sorrow and death into our world, is also clear. But whether we could have attained to that peculiar glory which is now in reserve for all the redeemed, if sin had not been introduced into our world and if we had not become sinners, and finally sinners

saved by grace, is another question, and one which only the future can decide.

If it was God's purpose to permit man to fall through the abuse of his own free agency, and also to raise him up to a higher degree of glory through his union to Christ Jesus his Redeemer than probably he could have attained in a state of endless and sinless perfection, we can see at once the necessity there was for a change in God's mode of dealing with man. The condition of man being changed by sin, there must needs be a change in God's mode of dealing with him if man would ever regain the favour of God and live in His presence. To save man, and to raise him to that degree of perfection and of glory which we now know is in store for the redeemed, mercy must be exercised towards him. To do that, justice for the present must give place to mercy. Man needs mercy, and the claims of justice must be met in some way before this can be done.

A change, then, in the government of God in regard to man is necessary, and this change introduces a new dispensation in the history of God's dealings with our race, and also a new feature in the mode of God's government. This is fully revealed to us in the plan of redemption, which is based upon the principles of mercy towards man rather than on those of justice. The execution of this plan is committed, by agreement, to the Second Person of the Trinity. All God's dealings with man henceforward are to be conducted through the mediation of the Lord Jesus. Hence it is that this new mode of government is called *mediatorial*. Human beings, then, since the fall are placed under the media-

torial government of Christ; they are the subjects of His mediatorial kingdom.

To accomplish the work which our Lord had undertaken, it was necessary for Him to assume human nature in connection with His own divine nature. In the nature that had sinned, He must obey the law of God, suffer its requirements, die, rise from the dead, and intercede for man. All this He has done. Hence our Lord informs us, in Matt. xxviii. 18, saying, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Again He says, "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." (John v. 22.) The Apostle Paul says, "All things are put in subjection to Him." "He is on the right hand of the majesty on high." And "all things are upheld by the word of His power." Heb. i. 3.

From these portions of Scripture it is evident that the world is now ruled and governed by the Lord Jesus as Mediator. The salvation of man is through Him alone; for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved, but the name of Jesus. Acts iii. 10–12.

This peculiar form of government began with the fall of man, and has continued to the present time. And, as it is in the hands of Jesus as Mediator, we call it His *mediatorial government*, and He now reigns over His mediatorial kingdom.

But our Lord did not give up His official government over the earth as God when He assumed the government over man as Mediator. On the contrary, He holds this latter government in addition to the former.

He then has two kingdoms which He at present governs. The first is the kingdom which He governs solely in virtue of His divine nature as God. This government is exercised over angels and men, and animals and all created things, as the mere creatures of His hand. The second kingdom has reference to man only, and that not merely to man as a creature, but to man as a fallen creature and to be saved. It of course has reference to every thing that concerns man in time and throughout eternity.

The question now properly arises, Is this mediatorial form of government to cease? This seems to be the opinion of the Church generally. But if this be the kingdom which our Lord is to deliver up, then it is evident that the following things must take place,—viz.:

1. Intercession for sinners on earth must cease.

2. Intercession for saints also must cease, not only on earth, but also in heaven.

3. Jesus must then cease to be a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, (Ps. cx. 4,) which will come in conflict with that prediction, and also with the declaration of the Apostle Paul in Heb. vii. 24, 25, where he affirms that the Lord Jesus Christ has an unchanging priesthood, a priesthood which is (*απαράβατον*) one that does not pass into other hands, but remains in His. And it is in consequence of this, His unchangeable priesthood, that He is able to save to the uttermost, or (*εις το παντελες*) forever, those who come unto God by Him, and that, too, because He ever liveth to make intercession for them.

The idea which we obtain from the passage just referred to is, that the Lord Jesus Christ, being now both

God and man in two distinct natures and yet but one person, is never to lay aside His human nature, but is to hold it eternally in conjunction with the divine nature, and that in these combined natures He is to be the medium of communication and the bond of union between God the Father and the redeemed saints forever.

That the intercession of our Lord for sinners on the earth during this dispensation is to cease when there are no more of them to be redeemed, is plain from the Bible. But that His intercession for the saints is also to cease is not the teaching of the Bible. Still, it must be so if the sentiment maintained by the great body of expositors of the Scriptures be the truth in the case,—viz.: that the kingdom spoken of by the apostle in 1 Cor. xv. 24 is the *mediatorial kingdom* of our Lord, and that the kingdom is to be given up in such a sense that the Son as Mediator is to be in subjection to God the Father, that He may be all in all.

Believing, as we do, that the kingdom which is to be delivered up to the Father is not, and cannot be, the mediatorial kingdom of Christ, we must look for another kingdom which may be governed by Him and then be delivered up, and the governing and delivering up of which will not interfere with the continued exercise of His mediatorial government, any more than His mediatorial government now interferes with His government, as God, over His universal and eternal kingdom.

Our Lord is now exercising His government over *two* kingdoms. His government of the one does not in the least degree interfere with His government of the other, though they are distinct from each other. Nor will this

prevent His having a *third* kingdom, which will be entirely distinct from the others, and which will be conducted in perfect harmony with them.

The two kingdoms which our Lord now governs are—

1. His UNIVERSAL KINGDOM.

We use this word merely for the sake of expressing our idea with distinctness. This kingdom He governs in virtue of His being DIVINE and the Creator of all things. This kingdom extends from eternity to eternity. It is over all His works as the mere creatures of His power. It includes angels and men, and the inhabitants of other worlds, if there are any intelligent beings in them.

2. The other is His MEDIATORIAL KINGDOM.

This kingdom our Lord now governs in virtue of the combination of His divine and human natures in one person, and in the character of a Mediator between God and man. This kingdom extends from the fall of man. It begins in time; it extends into eternity. It is included in the other, but is entirely distinct from it. It has regard only to man and to the things of this earth in connection with him,—to the redemption and the glorification of the Church, and to the punishment of the wicked.

But there is a *third* kingdom spoken of in the Scriptures. To this the apostle in 1 Cor. xv. refers. It is, as yet, a future kingdom. It is the MESSIANIC KINGDOM of our Lord, or His kingdom as the Messiah, the Son of man, the Son of David, the Heir of David's throne, and the Heir of all things. This is the only kingdom which our Lord can give up, so as to make this portion

of the Scriptures agree with those which affirm that He is a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

That there is such a kingdom in store for our Lord is evident from the predictions of the Bible. These predictions are very abundant. We need mention only a few of them.

(*a*) Ps. ii. 6: "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion;" or, as the verse according to some versions, and in accordance with the Septuagint, might be rendered, "But as for me, I am anointed king over Zion, His holy mountain."

This Psalm contains a prophecy concerning the Messiah, whose reign the wicked rulers of the earth will oppose. And yet, in opposition to all their enmity, God the Father will place Him as anointed King upon Mount Zion. And, to convince all that this reigning does not refer to the government of the Church in virtue of His mediatorial office and character, the apostle tells us that He was raised up from the dead for the express purpose, among others, that He might reign. He had been reigning as Mediator over the Church and the world for four thousand years before His incarnation. But as Messiah He has never yet reigned over man, over Israel, over the Church or the world, and certainly never over Mount Zion. (See Acts xiii. 33.) But He will thus reign.

(*b*) The eighth Psalm contains another prophecy concerning the reign of our Lord as Messiah over all the earth. The language of the sixth verse is, "Thou madest Him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under His feet."

As this prediction was uttered at least twenty-nine hundred and forty years after the fall of man, it can have no reference to Adam the first as an individual. It does, however, refer to man, but it is to the man Christ Jesus. This is evident from the language of the apostle, (Heb. ii. 8, 9,) who says, "But *now* we see not yet all things put under Him, [Jesus;] but we see Jesus, who was made a little [or for a little while] lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man, crowned with glory and honour."

It is manifest to all that Jesus, as a Divine Being, as God, and as Mediator, had all things under His control for thousands of years before the apostle penned his epistle. But when considered as man, or as Messiah, it is true that *not yet* are all things under Him. They are given to Him by promise. They are His in prospect. He will in due time reign over them. But now He is at the right hand of the Father and on His throne, (Rev. iii. 21), waiting until the time shall arrive for Him to enter upon the kingship of the earth and to reign over it as the Prince of peace for a thousand years,—yea, forever. Then will He sit upon His own throne. "He shall build the temple of the Lord, and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a Priest upon His throne." Zech. vi. 13.

(*c*) The prophecy of Daniel (chap. vii. 13, 14) contains another plain prediction in reference to the Messiah and His kingdom.

The prophet tells us that in "the night-visions he beheld one like the Son of man, coming to the Ancient of

days, and there was given to Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom that all people, nations, and languages should serve: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away; and His kingdom shall not be destroyed."

This kingdom can have no reference at all to the mediatorial kingdom of Christ, because it is not to be set up until after the stone cut out of the mountain without hands shall have fallen on the toes of the image and shall have ground them to powder. The idea here is that the kingdoms which are composed out of the old Roman Empire are all to be destroyed before this kingdom of the Messiah can be set up. This is of course a future event, for those kingdoms still exist.

Here, then, is a kingdom which our Lord is yet to have as the "Son of man," and which is different from those which He now governs as God and as Mediator. They are in existence; this one is not.

(*d*) In the Gospel according to Luke, (xix. 12–27,) our Lord represents Himself as a nobleman going into a far country for the purpose of receiving a kingdom for Himself and then to return. Here, then, is a kingdom which He did not possess while on the earth, a kingdom which He could receive only after His departure from earth, and a kingdom which He is to govern after He shall have returned to this earth, and not before it. This kingdom, it is evident, cannot be the mediatorial kingdom. He had obtained possession of that kingdom at the fall of man. He had been conducting the affairs of that kingdom for the previous four thousand years. He had the government of it before His advent and while He was

here in the flesh, and He governs it yet. But here is a kingdom which He cannot possess till He goes back to heaven and receives a full title to it, and then returns to reign over it, and that, too, on this earth.

Now, if we place this promised return of our Lord, as some do, not at the completion of this (*aion*) age or dispensation (Matt. xiii. 30, xxviii. 20,) but at the end of the world, (*kosmos*,) and at the final judgment, then there is no time or place left for Him to exercise His government over man, over animals, and over all this earth, as "the Son of man." There must of necessity be another kingdom besides the two which our Lord now possesses, and which He is to govern, in conjunction with them, before the final judgment. And the fact of His return fixes the place of His government to be on this earth. This future kingdom is to be "under the whole heavens."

(*e*) The announcement of the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary, concerning the birth of our Lord, contains a prophecy of this future kingdom so plain that it is surprising how its meaning ever could have been misunderstood:—"Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end." Luke i. 30–33.

This is the prophecy. It corresponds to the prediction of Isaiah, (chap. ix. 6, 7.) That prophecy has been fulfilled only so far as the birth of the promised child

is concerned. The government predicted in the seventh verse is yet future. It shall be, but is not now, on His shoulder. This government is to be *upon the throne of David.* The throne of David was an earthly throne, and not a spiritual or mediatorial throne. Jesus is the Son of David according to the flesh. But David in spirit calls Him his Lord. He is then both David's Lord and David's Son. (Ps. cx. 1; Matt. xxii. 42–45.) As the Son of David, Jesus cannot possibly inherit from His father David any thing more than what David possessed. That portion of this earth's surface that extended from Jerusalem as a centre to the Mediterranean on the west, and to the river Euphrates on the east, and to Meribah-Kadesh on the south, and to Hamath on the north, includes all the land that God ever promised to Abraham or to David, and which the descendants of Abraham, according to the promise, have never yet possessed.

The kingdom of David has been overthrown. The land was in the hands of the Gentiles before our Lord became incarnate. But the Church was not destroyed nor thrown down. Now, here is a prediction that the kingdom of David shall be re-established in the person of his royal Son, Jesus of Nazareth, the legal heir to the throne of His father, and his lineal descendant according to the flesh. The promise has no reference whatever to the Church, for that was already in the hands of the Saviour as the Mediator. It can refer only to the temporal kingdom of David. The raising up of the tabernacle of David that has been thrown down,—the reigning of Jesus the Son of David on the

throne of His father,—His reigning over the house of Jacob forever,—the kingdom which is to have no end or termination on the throne of David, but is to extend on all sides from it as a centre till it fill the whole earth,—cannot possibly, by any just interpretation, be made to refer to the mediatorial kingdom of our Lord, which He had been ruling and controlling as David's Lord for nearly three thousand years before David was born. It requires no small amount of false exposition of the predictions of the Bible to force them out of their plain and obvious meaning, and to make them refer merely to things spiritual, and those, too, as they are or may be found in connection with the Christian Church.

The kingdom of the Son of man, the Son of David, the Messiah, is, according to Isaiah, to have no end, (אֵין־קֵץ, no termination) on the throne of David, (ix. 7.) According to Daniel, (ii. 44,) it is "not to be left to other people;" that is, it is not to be succeeded by any other earthly government whatever, but "shall stand forever:" and, according to the angel in Luke i. 33 it is to have no end.

In looking at the several kingdoms which have occupied the territory included under the symbolical image of David, we find that there were four. The first great kingdom on this earth after the Flood was the Assyrian. The Medo-Persian followed, and was established upon the ruins of the first. The Grecian Empire followed the Medo-Persian, and was in turn destroyed by the Romans. In due time the Roman Empire was broken into pieces or into ten separate kingdoms, thus forming the toes and completing the image of Daniel. All these

kingdoms were on this earth. These ten fragmentary kingdoms are in their turn to be destroyed by another kingdom, which the God of heaven will set up, and whose government will be in the hands of the Son of man. This is the kingdom that shall never be destroyed. It is the last of the kingdoms of this earth. It is to have no successor. It will be eternal. It is, of course, a future one. It cannot be set up while any of the toes of the image—any of the ten kingdoms—remain. Nor can it be set up until the King Himself return. It is the kingdom of the Son of man.

Now, from these portions of Scripture, and from the exposition that we have given them, it is evident that the kingdoms spoken of by the apostle in 1 Cor. xv. 24 must be the *Messianic kingdom* of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is His kingdom, which He will govern, in virtue of His being the "Son of man," the "second Adam," the "Son of David," the heir to his throne, and the heir of all things. This will be a bright and glorious era, comprehended in, or running parallel with, the mediatorial kingdom of our Lord, and will, in one aspect of it, continue only for a thousand years. The delivering up of the kingdom to God at the expiration of the "thousand years" does not mean that the kingdom itself is to cease, any more than the resignation of a President of the United States after his term of four years shall have expired means that the government of the United States has come to an end. On the contrary, it is to continue forever. But it is to be handed over to God, or into the hands of the Trinity, after it shall have been delivered from every trace

of defilement and sin by the Son of man, so that it may be ruled and controlled by the Trinity in unity forever.

The specific nature of this kingdom is clearly defined in the Scriptures, and need not be misunderstood. It is a kingdom which in the nature of the case must be as distinct from the mediatorial kingdom of Christ as the theocracy in Jerusalem in days past was distinct from the mediatorial kingdom; and yet both were conducted by the same Lord and Head of the Church. It is, in short, the theocratic government of the Son of man restored to earth, and which shall not embrace one nation only, but all the family of man. The kingdoms of this world in its widest extent will then be united into one kingdom, and that one will be the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Son of David.

Having established, then, the fact that our Lord is to have a *third* kingdom, which, for the sake of distinction, we call His

MESSIANIC KINGDOM,

we may now consider the object He has in view in establishing this kingdom on the earth. This object is the restitution of all things, the bringing back this revolted province of God's vast empire to that state of order and of peace and of allegiance to God that characterized it at first.

When God made this world and placed man upon it, all was good. Not one wheel in the great machine of earth's mechanism was out of place. Every thing moved

on harmoniously. Man was good. The creatures were good. The earth itself was good. All things were good according to their several natures. But sin soon found an entrance into this world, and marred all the works of God's hand in our world. Man lost not only the image and the likeness of God in which he had been created, but also his dominion over earth. Satan usurped man's place, and has become, and continues to be, the prince of this world. All the governments now upon the earth are more or less under the control of Satan. The only organizations now among men of divine ordering are the family and the Church. There is not a Christian government on earth, in the proper acceptation of that term. They are all based upon principles which are directly adverse to the kingdom of Christ. There are individuals in most of these earthly governments who are more or less sanctified by God's grace, and who aim to promote the glory of God. And there are separate organizations in connection with the Church of Christ, which aim at the same thing. But there is no earthly government that aims at the promotion of the glory of God in its acts of legislation. They are all in this sense antichristian. They receive not their power directly from the Lord Jesus: they receive it from the people, from themselves. Hence our Lord must put them all down; for they aim not at His exaltation, but their own.

He is to put down, when He comes, "all rule," (*katargesei pasan archan.*) 1 Cor. xv. 24.

The Greek word *αρχη*, rendered "rule," means beginning, or power; and then a person invested with power.

The idea is that He is to put down all and every one that hath power, or authority, or rule over others, which does not emanate directly from the Lord Jesus as Ruler over all.

He is also to put down "ALL AUTHORITY," (*pasan exousian*, πασαν εξουσιαν.)

The Greek word εξουσια means *power*, or *one invested with power*, but under the authority of another. All men, then, who hold office under any government under heaven, are to be put down, because that government is not one of divine appointment.

He is to put down "ALL POWER, (δυναμιν.)

This word δυναμυς is used sometimes to denote angelic beings, whether good or bad, as in Rom. viii. 38:—"I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor principalities, nor *powers*, [δυναμεις,] shall be able to separate us from the love of God:" and also in 1 Peter iii. 22:—"Angels and authorities and *powers* [δυναμεις] being subject to Him."

By these terms the apostle includes all authority and power, whether in Church or State, on earth or in the air, whether possessed by man or fallen angels,—in short, every vestige of authority that is not delegated, to the individual exercising it, directly from Christ Himself, the Ruler and rightful Heir of all things.

The Greek word rendered here "put down" (καταργησῃ) occurs in the New Testament twenty-seven times. The general idea is not merely to "put down," but to abolish, to destroy, so that nothing of the thing shall be left.

We have, then, the truth brought most clearly to light, that our Lord shall set up a kingdom on this earth, as

the Messiah, the Son of man, and that in the exercise of His government as the Son of man He will completely annihilate every vestige of power and of authority, and every form of government that is now upon the face of the earth, that is not of His own appointing. The princes and the rulers of this world, the hosts of evil spirits, with Satan at their head, shall all be cast down, and our Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. All authority must emanate from Him. He is to be King over all the earth. All His enemies shall be under His feet, and Satan, the usurped prince of this world, shall be banished from it, and never more shall he gain possession of it.

As all the present organized forms of earthly government are to be overthrown, it is manifest that a new government over man and over the world shall be organized; for the human family will not be left for each one to walk in the sight of his own eyes. Our elder Brother, the Lord Jesus, shall then reign. He will be King over all the earth. Then will humanity, which has been so long oppressed and down-trodden, be raised up, and human nature will once more sway the sceptre of dominion over all the earth. But that sceptre will not be in the hand of fallible man. It will be in the hand of Jesus, the Son of man. He will hold it forever, so that by no possibility shall any fallen spirit ever after have rule over the earth, man's redeemed inheritance.

When our Lord shall enter upon the government of this earth, He will reign till all His foes be put under Him. This reign of the Messiah will be marked by a state of earthly bliss approximating that of Eden. This

will continue for the predicted period of a thousand years. If these years be prophetic, then that blissful period will continue for three hundred and sixty thousand years. During this time Satan will be bound in the bottomless pit. After that he will be loosed for a little season. He will come forth with all the malice of his rebel nature that has been accumulating for so long a time, and will make his last fruitless attack upon the Son of man. This will convince all that his opposition to Christ and to man is inveterate, unjust, cruel, and unalterably fixed. It will also show that no degree of restraint or length of confinement can change a nature that is at enmity with God. He will strive for, but can never more obtain, the possession of this world or any part of it. His attack upon the Son of man, and upon Jerusalem and the camp of the saints, will end in his final and eternal overthrow, and in his being cast into the lake of fire, while his deceived hosts shall be destroyed by fire coming down from God out of heaven. Then will the curse be removed from this earth utterly and forever.

THE LAST ENEMY, DEATH.

Satan having been cast into the lake of fire, Death, the last enemy to man, shall also be destroyed. This will be done by the resurrection of all the dead. The dead in Christ have had their part in the first resurrection. They will all have been raised up at the coming of our Lord. The rest of the dead, who do not live till after the thousand years are passed, will then be in like manner raised up. And, although their resurrection will be to

shame and everlasting contempt, it will be the overthrow of the empire of death. Not one of the whole human race will remain under the power of the grave. Death itself shall die. Death will no longer be a king, for he will have no subjects to rule over. All the bodies of the dead will be raised up. This is the last foe of man. As the last enemy shall then be destroyed, as Satan, the author of sin in this world, shall have been cast out into the lake of fire, and as nothing shall be left on earth of a sinful nature, but all will be made pure by the omnipotent power and grace of our Lord, He will then be prepared to deliver it up into the hands of the Father, or, rather, to *present* it to Him as a redeemed earth, and as brought back to that state of perfection and of excellence and of glory that it possessed when it first came forth from the hand of the Father. It will be presented to God a purified, redeemed, and perfect world, with all the ransomed saints upon it, and that, too, through the incarnation and work of the man Christ Jesus. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins only, but also for the whole world. (1 John ii. 2.) Glorious and blessed day! may it soon come!

THE SUBJECTION OF THE SON.

The next great event in this wonderful series of divine acts is the *subjection of the Son* Himself to God the Father, that He may be all in all.

What are we to understand by this subjection of the Son to the Father?

The Greek word rendered "subjection" is found in some of its forms in the New Testament thirty-eight times. It

is used by the Apostles Paul, Peter, and James, and also by the Evangelist Luke. It occurs in such connection as the following:—

Luke ii. 51: "And Jesus went to Nazareth, and was *subject* to them,"—viz.: his reputed parents.

Col. iii. 18: "Wives, *submit* yourselves [be subject] unto your own husbands as it is fit in the Lord."

1 Pet. v. 5: "Ye younger, *submit* yourselves unto the elder: yea, all of you be *subject* one to another."

In these passages the Greek word is the same. It is evident, from these instances, that the subjection spoken of can have no reference to inferiority as to intellect or of moral character. Jesus remained at Nazareth in subjection to the authority of Joseph and Mary; but He was not morally nor intellectually inferior to them. The wife is to be in subjection to her husband, not because she is intellectually or morally inferior to him, but in accordance to the divine plan, which has lodged the supremacy of government in the family in the husband, and which is to be shared with him by his wife. And the command to be in subjection to one another does not convey the idea of inferiority in moral excellence in any degree. The subjection spoken of is *official*, not moral.

The divine nature of God the Father, and of Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity, is one. Hence Jesus could truly say, "I and my Father are one." But when our Lord took upon Himself the office of Mediator, and when acting as Mediator, then His divine nature was merged into His official character. Then, speaking in that character, He says, "My Father is greater than I."

(John xiv. 28.) The superiority of the Father in this case is not a real or an essential one, but only *official.* As the government that sends an ambassador to a foreign court is officially greater than the ambassador that is sent away, so it is in the case of our Lord as Mediator.

The grand design of our Lord's mediatorial office and work is to save sinners. But He had something more in view than the saving the souls of His people from the power of Satan and from the pollution of sin. He purposed also to raise up human nature to its original official standing on the earth, and, in the nature that had sinned by yielding to Satan's temptations, to overcome Satan and triumph over him. But, more than this, He purposed to bring back this earth and all the creatures upon it to their original subjection to man. This purpose has not yet been executed; but it will be done. To do so, our Lord must come, and as the Son of man must reign in visible and in glorified humanity over earth. This is the grand object of His Messianic reign. When, then, the Lord Jesus, as Messiah, as the second Adam, or second likeness of God on earth, shall have brought all things in subjection to Himself, according to the prediction in Psalm viii., and when He as the seed of the woman—that is, in human nature—shall have bruised the head or headship of Satan's power, and shall have cast him out from the earth, and when He shall have brought back all things under His government, and shall have shown to the universe the transcendent glory and excellence of human nature redeemed, then will He deliver up the government of earth into the hands of the

Trinity, from whom He received His commission, and will present the whole to the Godhead as a finished and perfect work. The divine Trinity, the Godhead, of which our Lord is one person, will then for evermore sway the sceptre over creation and over man redeemed. Human nature in the person of our Lord will no more appear in His distinctive character as Messiah, and as reigning over the earth and over the house of Israel; for, the work having been accomplished for the performance of which He had assumed the government of earth as Messiah, that particular office must cease. Just as a committee appointed by any society to do a specific work, when that work is done and the committee report the same, the report is accepted and the committee is discharged, so in the case of our Lord. Having done the work assigned Him as Messiah, the office which was assumed for that special purpose passes away. He will still, however, govern the world,—not as Messiah any longer, but as one of the Persons of the Godhead. The Trinity in unity will henceforward govern the universe in all its parts. God will be all in all. The *Messianic kingdom* of our Lord will cease to be.

The ceasing of the Messianic kingdom after the period of a thousand years by no means terminates the mediatorial work or kingdom of our Lord. That kingdom is not limited by any lapse of years. That kingdom is an eternal kingdom. Our Lord will forever possess human nature; redeemed saints will forever need His upholding grace and power; and forever He will be the divinely-appointed medium of communion and intercourse between the Godhead and man. All that fulness of blessing that is treasured up in the

Godhead, all those exceeding riches of grace which God in His kindness will show unto His saints in the ages which are eternally to come, will be shown to them in and through Christ Jesus alone. He never can cease to be our elder Brother in glorified humanity, and by that tie to unite us eternally to Himself, and in Himself, to the undivided and eternally glorious Godhead. It cannot be that our Lord shall at some future time give up His mediatorial work and kingdom. If He should do so, what then could bind us to the Deity? what would prevent us from falling away from His favour? If angels once, perfectly holy, fell,—if Adam, made in the image and likeness of God, fell from His original position,—what is to hinder even the redeemed of the Lord from falling into sin while in the exercise of their free agency, if there be no Intercessor, no great High-Priest, who still bears our names upon His breast as He enters into the more immediate presence of God the Father, there to plead for us? No, no; this centripetal force that eternally draws us to and around the centre of power and of glory that is in the Godhead can never be dissolved or broken. Our life is hid with Christ in God. We live because He lives, and lives eternally to intercede for us. He remains a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedek. The Messianic kingdom of our Lord may be delivered up, but the mediatorial *never*. Jesus will cease to reign as man over men in the flesh, and "over all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, and the fish of the sea that pass through the paths of the sea." (Ps. viii.) But He can never cease to be God over all the works of His hands, blessed

for evermore. "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." Heb. vii. 25.

How wonderful is this display of God's grace to us! The more we contemplate the plans of God in reference to this world, as they have been and yet are to be developed, the more we shall be compelled to exclaim, with the apostle, "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" Rom. xi. 33.

God's name is "Wonderful." So are His works. What a wonderful system this plan of salvation is! That God should make man in His own image, and according to His own likeness, and give him dominion over all the work of His hand on earth, is a wonder. That He should permit man to fall, and that Satan should be allowed to reign as the prince of this world for so long a time and to ruin so many souls for time and for eternity, is more wonderful still. That the Divine Word should take upon Himself our nature, and in that nature should submit to be despised and buffeted and crucified by the creatures He had made, is more wonderful still. But that He should come again as the man Christ Jesus, in His own glory, in the glory of the Father, and with His holy angels,—that He should reign in glory as He will, and exalt human nature, through the introduction of sin and the plan of redemption, to a higher glory than man, probably ever could have attained if he had not been a redeemed sinner,—and that He should unite redeemed man, by the eternally-existing bond of His own humanity, to the self-existing Godhead, and thus permit us to behold

His glory and to be made partakers of the divine nature, (2 Pet. i. 4,)—are such marvellous displays of the wisdom, the power, the grace, and the goodness of God to sinful man, that eternity itself will not be long enough to develop the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of the love of God to us in Christ Jesus, and to afford to us, and all the ransomed of the Lord, sufficient opportunity to speak forth the praises of the Lord. Notwithstanding all the revelations that God has given us on the subject of our future being, it is still true that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor can the heart of man conceive, the glory that God hath prepared for them that love him.

Let us, then, rejoice that ultimately the object of all our prayers and efforts and desires, and of the work of Christ, will be accomplished. The work will be done. Satan is now marshalling all his forces to stir up the nations of the earth one against the other and to keep his usurped possession of this world. But Jesus, the Captain of our salvation, is mightier than "the strong man armed" and all his marshalled hosts. The strife will be no doubtful one. Jesus our Lord must reign. All His enemies and ours must be put down. Humanity must be redeemed from sin and Satan's power. The earth, too, must be redeemed from the curse that now rests upon it. The birthplace of Jesus, the scene of His sufferings, must yet be the place where the triumphs of His grace and His glory and power shall be displayed. This earth has been baptized by the blood of the Son of man. Here, too, His saints have shed their blood in honour of His name. That blood is the pledge of

earth's future and eternal redemption. Here, where the Church of our Lord has fought and has won her spiritual victories, here will she be crowned. Here the foes of Christ have triumphed, and triumph still; and here will they be despoiled of their power, and the saints of the Lord shall be glorified in the presence of all their foes. Crowns of glory await the now contending Church. We shall be crowned. Our Lord shall reign, and "with Him we shall reign on the earth." (Rev. v. 10.) "Come, Lord Jesus; come quickly."

THE END.

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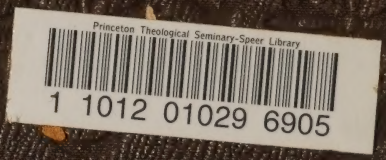
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